

“Cut The Fat” Report



Presented to the
Joint Legislative Committee on the Budget

March 20, 2001

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Rep. Charles Dewitt
Speaker of the House of Representatives

Sen. John J. Hainkel, Jr.
President of the Senate

FROM: Sen. John L. "Jay" Dardenne
Chairman of the Joint Legislative Committee on the Budget

Rep. Jerry Luke LeBlanc
Vice-Chairman of the Joint Legislative Committee on the Budget

RE: "Cut The Fat" Final Report

We are pleased to present the following report summarizing key issues and findings resulting from the Joint Legislative Committee on the Budget's "Cut The Fat" subcommittees. The subcommittees on civil service, education, general government and health care sought information on saving taxpayers' money, downsizing state government operations, and generally getting more bang for the citizens' tax dollars.

The report helps to establish a base of information about state government spending from which legislators can begin to make better-informed decisions on the state budget. Further, the numbers and statistics contained in the report help lay the groundwork for the Louisiana Legislature to consider both short-term and long-term solutions to problems plaguing state government operations. In many cases, the report points out where further legislative study is necessary.

We would like to thank all of the subcommittee members for their hard work and dedication during the hearing process. Also, we would like to express our appreciation to those citizens making suggestions via the "CutTheFat" website or by more traditional means. Direct citizen involvement is crucial to improving state government. An appendix of suggestions gathered from the public is included in this report.

**Subcommittee
On
Civil Service**

Civil Service

Issue 1: Does Louisiana employ too many state workers?

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and Census Bureau employment data indicate that Louisiana employs about 333,200 state and local government employees. This level of public employment ranks Louisiana first among fourteen Southern states with respect to state and local employees per capita population. Because the responsibilities and functions of state and local governments vary among states, making either state-to-state or local-to-local comparisons of public employment levels is difficult.

With respect to state employment, the Department of State Civil Service indicates there were 66,332 civil service incumbents in FY 00, with an average annual salary of \$26,932. The total payroll (excluding benefits) for these employees was estimated at \$1.8 billion.

Louisiana far exceeds its Southern counterparts when considering the total level of state and local government employees. According to the table below, Louisiana state and local government employment exceeds the Southern regional average by 16.3 percent.

	STATE			LOCAL			STATE AND LOCAL		
	Employees			Employees			Employees		
	State	Per		Local	Per		State and Local	Per	
Fourteen Southern States	Employees	10,000	Rank	Employees	10,000	Rank	Employees	10,000	Rank
	1999	Population		1999	Population		1999	Population	Rank
Louisiana	109,200	250	2	224,000	513	2	333,200	763	1
So. States excl. La	1,571,300	185		3,990,900	471		5,562,200	656	
Source: Governing Magazine, State and Local Source Book 2000.									

Louisiana ranked second in both state and local public employment and ranked first in state and local public employment combined. South Carolina ranked first in state public employment and fifth in local public employment. Conversely, Texas ranked first in local public employment and thirteenth in state public employment.

Staff Suggestions:

- *The Legislature may wish to consider creating a study committee to hold hearings during the 2001-2002 interim on state public employment levels to determine the*

exact number of state and local employees. Cooperation from Civil Service, the Division of Administration, the Louisiana Municipal Association, the Louisiana Police Jury Association, and other groups would be essential. The committee should be directed to conduct an in-depth analysis of the topics outlined above, to work closely with the Human Resources Estimating Conference, and report its findings to the Legislature prior to the 2002 Regular Session.

- *The study could also include an analysis of functional responsibilities and service levels to properly compare public employment across states.*
- *Further, the study could also examine the practice of placing certain funded positions in the other charges expenditure category and not including those positions in the agency's Table of Organization (T.O.).*

Issue 2: How can the state employee workforce be streamlined?

A recent Civil Service salary study indicates that Louisiana civil service employees on average earn 23 percent less than their private sector counterparts. A one-percent salary increase for state classified employees is estimated to cost about \$18 million annually, excluding related benefits.

The Department of Civil Service further indicates that the turnover rate among classified employees was about 22.5 percent in FY 00. The cost of this turnover was estimated at \$134 million by Civil Service (using a formula developed by the U.S. Department of Labor). Turnover costs include:

- replacement costs (recruiting, selection, testing, and orientation),
- training costs for new employees,
- lost productivity,
- lost time of employees impacted by the turnover (supervisors, managers, and specialists involved in recruiting and training), and
- administrative costs associated with all of these processes.

Staff Suggestions:

- *Significant savings could be gained by reducing the size of the state employment workforce to better approximate those levels in peer states.*
- *Some of these savings (both from reducing turnover costs and the reduction in the workforce) should be invested into increasing state employee salaries and/or enhancing employee professional development programs in state agencies.*

**Subcommittee
On
Education**

Education

Issue 3: How can the TOPS program be improved?

The Tuition Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) is projected to cost the state in excess of \$90 million during the current budget year, and increase to over \$106 million for 41,000 students in FY02. The program, however, is only funded at \$102 million in the FY02 Executive Budget.

TOPS currently pays tuition for roughly 35,000 students. The current average TOPS award is \$2,553 a year. Of 23,000 students who qualified for the minimum TOPS scholarships in the first two years of the awards, 9,600 lost their eligibility, resulting in a 42 percent forfeiture rate. Forfeiture rates are lower among TOPS students whose higher grades and ACT scores qualify them to receive extra stipends for books and supplies. Subcommittee discussions centered on the following topics dealing with rising costs and forfeitures associated with TOPS:

- **Either make students who lose their TOPS scholarships repay the money the state spent on their education or change the law to prevent TOPS recipients who do not meet college grade point requirements from requalifying for the scholarship.** Basic TOPS grants require a 2.3 GPA in the recipient's freshman year and a 2.5 GPA thereafter. Currently, however, students who fall below those standards have two years to get their grades in order and requalify for TOPS. More than 30 percent of all TOPS students have lost the free-tuition scholarships over the last two years because they made poor grades or failed to finish enough courses. TOPS paid tuition for a total of 30,000 high school graduates of the classes of 1998 and 1999, but almost 10,000 of the students lost them. Of those who lost TOPS scholarships, about 6,000 started college with ACT scores between 19 and 22.
- **Raise the required grade-point average (2.5 on a 4.0 scale) and ACT score (20 out of a possible 36) needed for eligibility to enter a four-year college.** TOPS pays tuition at Louisiana's two-year and four-year colleges for students who have scored at least 20 on the 36-point ACT and graduated from a Louisiana high school with at least a 2.5 grade point average after taking a prescribed set of courses. Students with higher grades and ACT scores of 23 or above win extra stipends for books and supplies and are more likely to meet the required college grades and hours of coursework for continued TOPS eligibility at four-year institutions. Forfeiture rates are lower among those students whose grades and ACT scores are high enough to win the extra stipends for books and supplies.
- **Impose a financial need component so students from families with high incomes cannot receive TOPS awards.** Nearly 7 percent of 34,273 TOPS recipients come from homes with reported adjusted gross incomes of more than \$150,000. (Not all wealthy parents are reported because some do not provide income data.) At least 74 TOPS recipients are from homes where incomes are between \$750,000 and

\$1,000,000. SB54 (Marionneaux) of the 2001 Regular Session proposes to add a financial need component to TOPS by establishing that a maximum household income of less than \$125,000 be a qualification beginning with high school graduates in the 2002-03 school year.

- **Make the TOPS scholarships available to students with ACT scores of 16.** Those with scores from 16 to 19 could get TOPS money to attend two-year colleges. If they succeed in community college settings, they could receive further money to continue in four-year programs. These less-prepared students could be channeled into less expensive community colleges, where tuition costs are half that of attending a four-year university. Such a move would cut costs and help students catch up before taking on tougher college courses at four-year schools. A stumbling block to this approach is that community college courses are not available in all areas of the state.
- **Lower the required score on the American College Test (ACT) from the current 19 to either 17 or 16 in an effort to get more high school graduates interested in skills training.** Requirements for the TOPS Tech Award are too similar to the requirements for free college tuition under TOPS. Few students who qualify for the Tech Award end up using it. Only 77 of 937 eligible students used it in 1999, and only 102 of 1,247 used it in 2000. Many students eligible for the Tech Award prefer four-year programs and are paying their own way to college rather than attending a technical school for free.
- **Require students to find their own financing for their first year of college.** If they finish the freshman year with full class schedules and good grades, they could receive TOPS money for subsequent years. If they graduate, they could be reimbursed for the freshman year.
- **Eliminate college stipends of \$400 and \$800 annually for some TOPS students with better ACT scores and high school grade point averages.** The stipends cost the state \$5 million annually for about 8,700 qualified students.

Staff Suggestions:

- *These TOPS discussion topics address issues on program costs and eligibility standards. These topics could be converted into either proposed legislation and/or administrative rules to be adopted by the Louisiana Student Financial Assistance Commission, which oversees the agency administering TOPS. SB54 already addresses adding a financial need component to TOPS.*

Issue 4: Should LSVI relocate to the LSD campus?

The Education Subcommittee examined the finances and programs of two special schools in the Baton Rouge area: the Louisiana School for the Visually Impaired (LSVI)

and the Louisiana School for the Deaf (LSD). The Subcommittee's findings are as follows:

- LSVI houses only about 50 children and is composed of aging buildings in need of significant repairs and improvements. The school's capital outlay request for FY02 totals \$8.1 million to remodel, demolish, or reconstruct campus buildings; comply with ADA accessibility guidelines; and reroof certain campus buildings.
- Approximately ten states currently have their state schools for the visually impaired and the deaf co-located at a common, shared site.
- Testimony by education officials before the Education Subcommittee indicated that it is physically possible to move LSVI's operations to the LSD campus. The officials noted that most space currently available on the LSD campus would have to be remodeled to accommodate the needs of LSVI's students, most of who are also multiply handicapped.
- An earlier analysis by the Division of Administration indicated that such a relocation could save the state at least \$500,000 a year in state funds. The two schools could share buildings and services such as: infirmary; physical education complex; cafeteria; student center; auditorium; maintenance; and security.
- Potential savings resulting from relocation could perhaps be re-directed to outreach efforts for visually impaired students across the state. Advocates for the visually impaired estimate that only about \$750,000 of LSVI's \$5.4 million current operating budget is devoted to outreach efforts such as identifying, training, and certifying teachers in local school districts who specialize in working with blind children.

Staff Suggestions:

- *The Legislature may wish to consider creating a study committee to hold hearings during the 2001-2002 interim on relocating LSVI to the LSD campus. Cooperation from the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Department of Education, and the Division of Administration would be essential, if this option were to be pursued. The committee should be directed to conduct an in-depth analysis of the topics outlined above and report its findings to the Legislature prior to the 2002 Regular Session.*

Issue 5: What is the role, scope, and mission of Higher Education?

The Education Subcommittee investigated the opportunities provided to Louisiana citizens for education and training beyond high school. The Subcommittee's key findings were as follows:

- **Louisiana students are not well prepared to take advantage of college.** Whereas 82 percent of all Louisiana 18- to 24-year-olds have a high school credential, this still ranks fourteenth (14th) in the sixteen (16)-state region of the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB). Statistics show that Louisiana's eighth-graders rank at or near the bottom of the region on national assessments in reading and math. This indicates these students are not well prepared for challenging high school courses. Louisiana's 11th and 12th graders rank last in the region when enrolling in advanced science and math courses.
- **A relatively small percentage of Louisiana student entering post-secondary education complete their academic and vocational programs.** Only 28 percent of full-time freshmen seeking bachelor's degrees at Louisiana's public four-year colleges complete their degree at their institution of initial enrollment within six (6) years. Only fifteen percent of full-time freshmen seeking associate's degrees and certificates at Louisiana's public two-year colleges complete their certificate or degree at their institution of initial enrollment within three (3) years. This ranks Louisiana fourteenth (14th) and eighth (8th), respectively, within the SREB region.
- **Louisiana has too many four-year institutions.** When compared to the SREB on a per capita basis, Louisiana should have only about nine (9), not thirteen (13), four-year schools.
- **Louisiana does not have enough two-year institutions.** When compared to the SREB on a per capita basis, Louisiana should have about sixteen (16), instead of only nine (9), two-year community colleges.
- **Louisiana has too many vocational-technical institutions.** When compared to the SREB on a per capita basis, Louisiana should have only about twenty (20), not 42, vocational education institutions.

The Board of Regents' Master Plan for Higher Education in Louisiana was presented to the Subcommittee and stressed the following topics:

- **Increase access to higher education services for the state's population.** This approach is intended to provide Louisiana citizens with greater opportunities for a better quality of life. Key goals include increasing the overall number of college students and increasing the number of minority students.
- **Ensure that quality instruction is provided to all students in the state's higher education institutions.** This approach requires that institutions be held accountable for the educational services they provide. Reducing the portion of first-time freshmen needing remedial work is one of Regent's goals. The Master Plan also envisions increasing the graduation rate for students who earn a bachelor's degree within six years.

- **Provide services to each institution's community and the state as a whole.** The Master Plan calls for awarding more teacher degrees, raising the level of "student satisfaction," and maximizing literacy programs for undereducated adults. Regents also intends to take advantage of technologies developed at the state's universities by increasing "intellectual property" disclosures, licensing agreements, and start-up businesses.

Achieving the Master Plan's ultimate goals will, of course, require proper funding levels to be realized. According to the funding formula used by the Board of Regents, Louisiana's post-secondary educational system is under funded by \$260 million when compared to funding levels in other Southern states. Of this amount, about \$90 million is needed to put faculty salaries at the regional average. The funding formula uses criteria as to the kind of institution, its range and mix of program offerings, and its general enrollment level to set the funding target. As noted above, Louisiana's institutional mix varies greatly from that of other states in the South and could be re-aligned to meet the educational needs of its citizens. Such a re-alignment could likely lead to a better allocation of financial resources than currently exists. As admission requirements are raised at the state's four-year schools, students should become better prepared to enter college. Further, those students needing additional or remedial education should, under Regents' Master Plan, utilize the state's emerging (and less expensive) community college system.

Staff Suggestions:

- *The Legislature could ensure, through its oversight function, that the Board of Regents continues to refine and re-define the role, scope, and mission of the state's higher education system to better meet the educational needs of its citizens.*

**Subcommittee
On
General Government**

Department of Agriculture

Issue 6: How can the bid process for commodity storage space be improved?

The Department of Agriculture rents warehouse space for the storage of commodities received from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. These commodities are distributed to school systems for use in their breakfast and lunch programs and to qualified individuals. To be eligible to receive commodities valued at approximately \$25 million annually, the Department of Agriculture must provide for the storage and distribution of those commodities to eligible recipients.

Storage of the commodities received under this program requires that the department lease both cold storage and general warehouse space in strategic locations throughout the state. Leases for such space must be obtained pursuant to the public bid law. The Office of State Purchasing of the Division of Administration (OSP) is responsible for the solicitation of bids for the lease of warehouse space. While the OSP's staff is well-versed in the public bid law, they are not experts in every service and commodity requested to be purchased by state agencies. For example, OSP may not know if the geographic locations requested by Agriculture are the most efficient distribution sites based on the proximity of the ultimate users. Further, OSP may not necessarily know if the allocations requested for either cold storage or general warehouse space were appropriate for the type of commodity expected to be received during the year.

Staff Suggestions:

- *The Joint Legislative Committee on the Budget should consider inviting officials from OSP to a future meeting of the Committee to discuss the Office's ability to deal with complicated bid specifications. Specifically, OSP should explain how it processes such bids, particularly in those instances when it lacks sufficient in-house expertise to adequately evaluate an agency's request.*
- *OSP should be asked to explain the following:*
- *How does OSP know if an agency's request for the procurement of a product or service is crafted to favor a particular vendor?*
- *What does OSP do if it believes a request for the procurement of a product or service is crafted to favor a particular vendor?*
- *Does OSP have any recommendations to improve its capability to evaluate complicated or highly technical requests from agencies for the procurement of goods and/or services?*

- *Does OSP believe that the request from the Department of Agriculture for the procurement of warehouse space could be described as a complicated or highly technical request? How was this matter handled by OSP?*

Drug Courts

The Subcommittee on General Government discussed the viability of drug courts as a crime-fighting tool. The number of drug courts has grown rapidly in Louisiana in recent years. Statistics make a compelling argument for drug courts' improved cost savings over traditional incarceration and the courts' lower recidivism rates. For example, a 1998 study from Washington State found that drug court graduates were nearly three times less likely to be charged with a new crime one year after completing drug court compared with offenders who dropped out or never enrolled.* The Office for Addictive Disorders (OAD) began funding drug courts in 1997. Six courts were initially established at a cost of \$1.5 million. Since that time, Louisiana has been one of the fastest growing states in initiating new drug courts. Presently, the state has 25 drug courts in operation (14 adult, 11 juvenile) with 1,733 active cases at a cost of approximately \$7 million for FY 01.

*("Do Drug Courts Save Jail and Prison Beds?", Vera Institute of Justice, 2000).

Issue 7: What is the future of the state's Drug Court programs?

Many of the early drug courts were established using federal grant money and are facing a loss of funding as the grants begin to expire. For FY 02, the Executive Budget recommends OAD receive \$3.6 million in State General Fund to replace the expiring grants.

Staff Suggestions:

- *The average annual incarceration cost of an adult inmate in Louisiana is \$13,000 per year, compared to \$3,600 for a drug court adult treatment slot. For juveniles, the incarceration cost is \$40,515 per year compared to \$5,000 for a drug court treatment slot. Since Louisiana has one of the highest incarceration rates per capita in the U.S., any rehabilitative program that could potentially divert a person from prison at a lower cost may be worthy of continued funding. While further study of drug courts' long-term success rates is definitely warranted, the data available at present indicate a lower recidivism rate for these programs than for a person released from prison without attending drug courts.*

Issue 8: What sort of plan is needed to expand Drug Court programs?

According to data presented to the General Government Subcommittee, OAD reports that existing drug courts could be expanded by 308 adult slots and 188 juvenile slots statewide with additional funding of \$2.1 million in State General Fund and could add 200 new slots at seven new drug courts for a total of \$741,000 in State General Fund. None of this new and expanded funding is in the Executive Budget for FY 02. In the

future, additional requests for State General Fund money for drug courts are likely to occur as other federal grants expire or if treatment slots are expanded or created.

Staff Suggestions:

- *The Legislature should consider requesting that the Legislative Auditor examine Louisiana's current structure of drug court programs. The current funding stream is difficult to trace, and different jurisdictions often compete for the same grant funds.*
- *If new drug courts are implemented statewide, a policy and procedure plan may be necessary to ensure the same quality level of drug courts across the state. Current data also indicate that the most effective drug courts have judges who are deeply involved in making the programs work. It could be disadvantageous to the state to implement a large number of new drug court slots simply because the model has worked in smaller scale programs in certain areas of the state with judges highly motivated to make their programs work.*
- *The Legislature may also consider the possibility of using Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) money to fund drug courts. See the discussion on TANF funds later in this report for more information.*

Department of Elections

Issue 9: Should the Department of Elections and the Secretary of State be merged?

The Department of Elections and the Secretary of State both perform an “elections” function. The splitting of the “elections” responsibilities between the two departments duplicates some positions and expenses that could be eliminated if the departments were merged into one.

The “elections” responsibilities performed by each department are as follows:

- The Department of Elections is responsible for registration of voters and the voting machines for Election Day.
- The Secretary of State is responsible for candidate qualifying, ballot printing, and election results certifying.

A fiscal note on an earlier merger proposal estimated a State General Fund savings of \$400,000 associated with the elimination of duplicative positions and expenses. Increased efficiency of having both functions coordinated by a single department is not readily quantifiable in monetary terms.

Staff Suggestions:

- *The Legislature should consider merging the Department of Elections and the Secretary of State beginning in 2004.*
- *As an alternative, the Legislature should consider moving all the responsibilities for elections into the Department of Elections, leaving the Secretary of State the responsibilities for Archives, Commercial, and Museums programs.*

Issue 10: Should the Legislature oversee Election Day expense reimbursements?

Election Day expenses reimbursed by the Department of Elections to parish clerks of court are not clearly defined. A review of expenses reimbursed to clerks of court from a recent statewide election indicated that a number of these expenses were questionable. For example, a large screen television was purchased by one clerk to train elections commissioners. Another clerk used funds to create and maintain a separate Internet web site containing current elections results, duplicating the Secretary of State’s existing election results web site.

Staff Suggestions:

- *The Legislature should consider amending current law to require that the standard guidelines for the reimbursement of Election Day expenses prepared by the Secretary of Elections must be approved by the Joint Legislative Committee on the Budget.*

GARVEE Bonds

Issue 11: Should the state issue GARVEE Bonds for transportation projects?

The state gasoline tax, the primary revenue source for highway maintenance and construction, is growing at a rate of 2.4 percent annually. The construction inflation rate is approximately 7 to 9 percent per year. Using a construction inflation rate of 8 percent, the cost of a highway construction project would increase by approximately 40 percent if the project had to be delayed 5 years due to unavailable funding. A 1995 change in federal law allows states to use a portion of their anticipated federal highway funds as a revenue stream to support bond issues. Bonds supported by federal highway funds are called Grant Anticipation Revenue Vehicles (GARVEE) Bonds.

An advantage of issuing GARVEE Bonds to finance state highway construction projects is that they permit the state to complete construction projects earlier than would otherwise be possible. Further, advancing construction project completion dates saves money. Debt service costs associated with GARVEE Bonds are estimated to be in the 5.5 to 6 percent range, while inflation in highway construction is estimated to be in the 7 to 9 percent range. The differential in interest costs between GARVEE Bonds and the annual inflationary increase in construction costs could represent substantial savings for the state.

Staff Suggestions:

- *Legislation could be considered authorizing the issuance of GARVEE Bonds.*
- *The Legislature should request that the Department of Transportation and Development prepare a list of construction projects eligible for GARVEE Bond financing along with computations showing the potential savings for each project. It should be noted that the very low growth rate of TTF revenue continues to pressure DOTD's operating budget. Issuance of GARVEE bonds will increase the commitment of TTF funds to debt service which in turn will reduce funds for operating purposes.*

Louisiana Stadium and Exposition District*

Issue 12: How can the Louisiana Superdome be modernized?

The 26-year-old Louisiana Superdome has a backlog of capital improvements and maintenance needs. To help meet these needs, Act 1191 of 1995 dedicates \$2.3 million in hotel/motel occupancy tax collections from Orleans and Jefferson parishes to the District's Renewal and Replacement Fund.

The stadium recently hosted a slate of NCAA Division I Men's Basketball sub-regional games and is the site chosen for the 2002 Super Bowl. For the facility to remain competitive with other venues across the nation in attracting major entertainment and sporting events, the stadium must be modernized.

The District collects additional revenues that are declared surplus and distributed according to a fixed schedule in state law. Act 1191 delineates the following:

- payment of debt service on bonds (\$14.2 million currently);
- \$2.3 million for the Renewal and Replacement Fund; and,
- \$500,000 to the Greater New Orleans Sports Foundation.

The Act provides for a pro rata distribution of any surplus collections according to this schedule:

Jefferson Parish For Tourism Promotion (1.13% of annual hotel tax collections, about \$30M)	\$339,000 (approximately)
New Orleans Recreation Department	\$2,200,000
Xavier University	\$250,000
Southern University, N. O. Small Bus. Center	\$250,000
Westbank Sports and Civics Center	\$500,000
University of New Orleans, HRT School	\$250,000
New Orleans Visitors and Information Center	<u>\$350,000</u>
Estimated Annual Maximum Surplus	\$4,139,000

The District may use anticipated surplus hotel/motel tax collections for Superdome renovations only when approved by the Joint Legislative Committee on the Budget.

Staff Suggestions:

- *The Legislature could consider dedicating all or part of the Louisiana Stadium and Exposition District's estimated \$4.1 million surplus tax collections to the Louisiana Superdome. Such a strategy could either minimize or eliminate the District's future need for State General Fund assistance through the annual capital outlay appropriation. Further, a steady revenue stream would better enable the Superdome to continue to host prestigious events.*

- *The Legislature may also consider statutorily increasing the amount of funding currently provided for the Renewal and Replacement Fund, providing a stable stream of revenue each year.*

* This topic was not specifically included on the Cut the Fat subcommittee agendas, but would have been considered if the committee had more time to discuss issues.

Prison Enterprises

Issue 13: How can state agencies better utilize Prison Enterprises?

The Subcommittee on General Government met to discuss the operation and outcomes of Prison Enterprises. The agency defines its primary mission as three-fold:

- to lower the cost of incarceration by using resources of the Department of Corrections to produce food, fiber, and other necessary items used by inmates,
- to make available to state agencies and to local entities products and services produced by inmates, and
- to provide work opportunities for inmates.

Prison Enterprises produces a variety of goods and services, from traditional prison industry items like clothing, license plates, and row crops, to more varied activities like janitorial services and furniture restoration. The agency estimates that 60 percent of its total sales of approximately \$23 million per year are to the Department of Corrections. Due to the large number of state prisoners being housed in local facilities, the agency indicates that its sales to parishes and municipalities have also increased. All items produced by Prison Enterprises are on state contract; thus, there is no need for agencies to bid on every purchase. There are restrictions, however, on Prison Enterprises to prevent it from being in direct competition with the private sector.

A main issue concerning Prison Enterprises is the extent of its utilization by state departments. Louisiana law encourages state agencies to use Prison Enterprises' products whenever possible, yet this law does not appear to be adhered to very well. On the other hand, some state agency representatives have suggested that the quality of Prison Enterprises' goods are inferior to similar items available in the private sector and that the selection of items is not as varied.

Staff Suggestions:

- *The Division of Administration should take steps to ensure that Prison Enterprises goods and services are used more often by state agencies to help achieve cost savings.*
- *Prison Enterprises should endeavor to improve the quality of its goods and services provided to state agencies.*
- *A periodic survey of agencies could be initiated to determine what is preventing them from using Prison Enterprises goods and services more often. Prison Enterprises and State Purchasing could collaborate on the survey and use the results to better target Prison Enterprises offerings to the needs of state agencies.*

Office of Risk Management

Issue 14: How could ORM's management information system be retooled to improve claims processing?

The Division of Administration's Office of Risk Management (ORM) manages the state's self-insurance program. The office provides 15 different types of insurance, the largest of which are Road Hazards, Workers' Compensation, and Medical Malpractice. Loss payments from all types for FY 00 totaled \$87.9 million.

ORM uses a management information system to track claims and to provide information to adjusters and attorneys. This system, however, cannot provide:

- historical "win v. loss trial comparisons"
- "claimant demand v. final settlement comparisons" by type of claim, judicial district assignment, and pertinent facts of the claim.

Without this capability, ORM's decision-making is left solely to the judgement of the attorneys, adjusters and supervisors involved with a case. A management information system that can fully document claim outcomes would enable ORM to make better decisions on claim settlements and litigation matters.

Staff Suggestions:

- *ORM should enhance the capabilities of its management information system so it can provide historical outcome information that can be used to better guide current claim decisions. The enhancements would permit adjusters, attorneys, and supervisory personnel working a claim to access the agency's historical database by using basic facts about the claim. At a minimum, the enhanced capabilities of the management information system should produce a "win v. loss comparison" of all claims in the database with similar characteristics. ORM should report its progress toward enhancing the capabilities of its management information system to the Joint Legislative Committee on the Budget before the beginning of the FY03 budget development cycle.*

Issue 15: Is ORM adequately staffed?

ORM's Table of Organization was reduced by fourteen positions in FY 01 as part of an administration move to downsize government. ORM must maintain an adequate staffing level so it can properly investigate and process over 13,000 claims received annually.

Staff Suggestions:

- *The Legislature should consider restoring fourteen positions. These positions would provide the agency with sufficient staffing to adequately process the number of claims it receives annually. The agency could be directed to make a quarterly report to the Joint Legislative Committee on the Budget, providing basic performance information on the number of claims handled and the effectiveness and efficiency with which these claims are disposed.*

Issue 16: When will ORM implement the Return to Work Program?

Act 916 of 1999 created the Return to Work Program that was designed to reduce the cost of Workers' Compensation claims. The Office of Risk Management expends approximately \$26 million annually for indemnity and medical costs related to Workers' Compensation claims. This is one of the more expensive types of insurance offered by ORM.

Presently, the Return to Work Program has not been implemented statewide as required by R.S. 39:1547. It is estimated the state could save between \$6 million and \$12 million annually if the Return to Work Program were to be implemented statewide. Pilot projects at Pinecrest Developmental Center and Louisiana State Penitentiary have resulted in a dramatic reduction in the cost of Workers' Compensation claims and indemnity payments, as well as a reduction in the number of employee days lost. The Office of Risk Management has issued two Requests for Proposals in an effort to implement the Return to Work Program, but to date, nearly two years after the program was created, no vendors have been selected.

Staff Suggestions:

- *Require the immediate and full implementation of the Return to Work Program on a statewide basis. The Office of Risk Management should submit a periodic status report to the Joint Legislative Committee on the Budget outlining the progress it has made in fully implementing the Return to Work Program. The report should include performance standards comparing the cost and employee loss time both before and after implementation of the program.*

Teen Pregnancy Prevention Programs

The Subcommittee on General Government met to discuss Teen Pregnancy and Abstinence Programs, mainly focusing its attention on possible administrative cost savings among the state's teen pregnancy prevention programs. Based on data from the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, these programs seem to be addressing the target population. From 1991 to 1998, Louisiana's birth rate among teen girls aged 15 to 19 dropped by 14 percent.*

*(<http://www.teenpregnancy.org/usa/la.htm>)

Issue 17: Could the state's teen pregnancy prevention efforts be better coordinated?

Various state agencies currently operate teen pregnancy prevention programs in Louisiana — several offices in the Department of Social Services and the Department of Health and Hospitals, among others. At present, there appears to be little coordination among these agencies, although they are offering programs designed to meet a common goal of reducing the number of teen pregnancies. These agencies use funding derived from several different streams, from federal block grants to state match money. The agencies, however, do not appear to be directly competing for funding.

Staff Suggestions:

- *The opportunity exists for the state to possibly save money in administrative costs by having one agency run teen pregnancy prevention programs. At the very least, better coordination is needed among the agencies that already have teen pregnancy prevention programs in place. Better coordination could also be beneficial in maximizing the effectiveness of the different funding streams used for teen pregnancy prevention programs and in developing a more targeted approach for higher risk teens. The Legislature should carefully scrutinize these programs during review of the FY 02 appropriations bill and add language requiring closer coordination of the programs.*

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)*

Issue 18: How could Louisiana best use TANF funding for needy families?

Federal authorities have recently questioned Louisiana's use of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds. TANF is a block grant for state programs designed to serve needy families and was created by the welfare reform law of 1996.

The Department of Social Services (DSS) considers TANF funding to be non-recurring since the program must be re-authorized by the federal government in 2002. As a result, DSS has left a significant portion of its TANF allocation unspent in previous years, resulting in an accumulated balance of over \$169 million. Other states have also followed this "holding pattern" approach to spending TANF dollars, and there is concern that the preponderance of large surplus funds among the states will lead to a lower level of funding from the federal government after re-authorization.

Federal regulations pertaining to prior year TANF funding stipulate that the unspent \$169 million may only be used for cash assistance-type programs in the current and future fiscal years. Also, until recently, DSS had a limited policy plan for utilizing current year and future TANF funding. The current year block grant allocation can be used for more flexible, non-assistance programs designed to prevent people from ever entering the state's welfare system. DSS must obligate current year TANF funds for programs before the end of the federal fiscal year on Sept. 30, 2001, or lose spending flexibility.

Since January 2001, state officials have been developing a new policy to optimize TANF funds. A draft version of this spending plan will soon be released. The plan will contain a number of new and existing programs, designed to lessen the dependence on government by needy families. During the upcoming Regular Session, this preliminary TANF plan is intended to serve as a blueprint for reaching a consensus on the future course of TANF spending in Louisiana.

Staff Suggestions:

- *Louisiana should not use TANF funding to supplant state general fund money in programs existing before 1996 when welfare reform was initiated, since the federal government is now highly scrutinizing this type of spending and future problems could result. The state could set up mirror programs using TANF, however, which perform essentially the same services as existing programs, as long as the mirror programs are tied to TANF goals. There are no federal restrictions on using TANF money for new programs for needy families, and the state can set its own eligibility requirements.*

- *Because current year TANF funding is in danger of rolling over into the large unobligated balance and thus losing spending flexibility, every effort should be made to obligate current year funding into programs for needy families as soon as possible.*
- *The Department's prior policy course of using TANF money seems to have erred on the side of caution, but such a conservative tactic is not without merit. Therefore, in developing the new TANF plan, programs should include a "sunset clause" that will allow DSS to terminate them if TANF funding should be reduced or eliminated by the federal government. This would prevent the state from winding up in a situation of having many programs in place with no money available that were originally based on TANF funding.*
- *During the meetings to develop new TANF policy, several subject areas have been discussed repeatedly. Programs being considered include such initiatives as early childhood development, teen pregnancy prevention, domestic violence prevention, utilities assistance, drug courts, and after-school tutoring, among others.*

* This topic was not specifically included on the Cut the Fat subcommittee agendas, but would have been considered if the committee had more time to discuss issues.

Technology

Issue 19: How can state government make better use of technology?

Louisiana ranks first in the South in the number of state and local government employees. Many of these employees provide services to citizens who must appear in person at a state agency to obtain assistance. Examples of such services are driver's license renewals, birth certificates, permits, boat registration, hunting and fishing licenses, etc. Most, if not all, of these services could be provided through strategically placed kiosks rather than requiring citizens to appear in person at a state agency.

Even services that required positive identification of an individual could be handled through a specially equipped kiosk using retina or fingerprint scans to verify identity. Over time, kiosks could greatly reduce the need for over-the-counter state operations eliminating employee and benefits costs as well as the purchase and upkeep of facilities. Kiosks can be easily moved to address the changing traffic patterns of citizens. If a kiosk is located in a mall that sees its consumer traffic patterns diminish because of the opening of a new mall, the kiosk could be relocated to the new mall with little expense.

Services available through kiosks would also be available 24 hours a day seven days a week increasing the availability of those services to many citizens who are working during the normal hours maintained by state agencies.

Staff Suggestions:

- *The Legislature may consider directing the Division of Administration to expedite the development of technology that will permit citizens to access state services through kiosks and the Internet. The Legislature may also consider requesting an assessment from DOA of potential usage of kiosk technology in state departments and that a report be made to the Joint Legislative Committee on the Budget by November 15, 2001.*

**Subcommittee
On
Health Care**

Primary Care Access

Issue 20: How can the state improve access to primary health care?

This Subcommittee focused on the role of primary and preventive health care services in Louisiana. The Subcommittee entertained recommendations by the Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH), Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center, Health Care Services Division (HCSD) and various stakeholders on advancing the current structure for the provision of health care services.

Louisiana currently ranks 49th in the nation in overall health (Health Care State Rankings 2000 by Morgan Quitno Press). Louisiana's poor standing in areas such as healthy birth rates, mortality, access to health care services and facilities, statewide (personal and public) expenditures on health care, disease, lifestyle, and disability led to this ranking. At the heart of this issue is the approximately 22 percent of the State's population that is uninsured.

Budget stabilization is key in setting the course for the future provision of public medical services in Louisiana. Currently, planning efforts on this front are not adequately addressing the state's long term needs.

In the Medicaid program, current expenditure projections for FY 01 forecast a \$64.3 million deficit. Further compounding the problem is an Executive Order directing DHH to reduce State General Fund expenditures by \$11.6 million. When matching federal funds are taken into account, this results in a total cut of \$39 million. Thus, DHH has a total projected operating expenditure deficit of \$103 million (\$30 million State General Fund) with only three and one-half months remaining in the fiscal year to address the problem. DHH's options to resolve this situation are as follows:

- **Utilize creative financing methodologies.** DHH could add non-recurring revenues such as overcollections or excess statutory dedications generated in prior years to offset the deficit in state matching funds.
- **Push the payment of claims for services provided in FY 01 into FY 02 once the state matching funds are exhausted.** The claims will have to be paid in the next year, however.
- **Implement deep programmatic cuts.** Such a move would possibly limit access to vital services for the state's most needy citizens. For example, the DHH could suspend discretionary medical services for the remainder of the fiscal year.
- **Combine any of these options.**

Furthermore, the forecast for next fiscal year does not improve. As recommended in the Executive Budget for FY 02, the Medicaid program is under-funded by a minimum of

\$300 million (\$88.9 million State General Fund) based on current expenditure and utilization trends. The outlook does not improve in future years. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services projects health care expenditures to double in the next decade.

The state's public health care institutions suffer from budget instability as well. The funding level for HCSD is reduced by \$77 million (\$23.5 million State General Fund) in the FY 02 Executive Budget. Implementing reductions of this magnitude require clear policy decisions on the future role of these facilities in the provision of health care services in Louisiana. Downsizing the budget does not decrease the demand for services proportionately. Further, the operations of the state's hospital system cannot be quickly restructured.

Any further restructuring of health care service delivery in Louisiana should ensure that adequate access to primary and preventive care is provided. Primary care should be the point of entry into a comprehensive health care system. It is the point at which routine illnesses and injuries are diagnosed and treated. More importantly, it is the point where diagnosis is made and initial treatment begins for more severe illnesses and diseases. Adequate access to primary care, if appropriately pursued, should result in improved health status for both the individual and for a population.

DHH has developed a seven-point plan to address the health care service delivery needs in Louisiana. HCSD has also developed a plan of action for changes to its operational structure to better serve the health care needs of its consumers while maintaining an emphasis on medical education. Various private groups are also developing on-going strategies to reinvent health care in Louisiana.

Staff Suggestions:

At a minimum, the Legislature should consider the following:

- *The role of local communities in the provision of health care should emphasize the availability of services and providers.*
- *Potential public-private partnerships should be fostered to better coordinate health care service delivery. The cooperative endeavor agreements being negotiated between HCSD facilities and local providers are prime examples of this type of partnership.*
- *New models for the provision of primary and/or preventive care could be explored. Initiatives such as HCSD's Disease Management program, DHH's CommunityCare Program, and the Physician Loan Repayment program are exemplary approaches toward ensuring a comprehensive plan of health care in Louisiana.*

- *New funding streams and financing mechanisms must be explored. Implementing these new initiatives may require a re-allocation of the way Louisiana currently funds health care in the state. One option could be the introduction of legislation to statutorily dedicate the proceeds of the Hospital Intergovernmental Transfers Program as match in the Medicaid program.*
- *A renewed emphasis on outcome-based performance measures should be taken in the state's health care system. Such checks could help ensure that Louisiana is improving the overall health of its citizens.*
- *The Legislature should consider establishing a select committee to assess and to evaluate the state's public health care service delivery system. Such a committee could present its findings and recommendations to the Legislature prior to the 2002 Regular Session.*

Appendix: "Cut The Fat" Responses

Presented to the
Joint Legislative Committee on the Budget

March 20, 2001

Foreword:

The following report contains responses from Louisiana citizens writing to the “Cut The Fat” Internet site from Fall 2000 through Winter 2001. These responses discuss many different areas of government and have been grouped in this report as they were received from the web site. They have been checked for spelling mistakes and formatted to fit this report, but no content has been changed, aside from the removal of the name and e-mail address of the sender. Grammar irregularities, colloquial language, and punctuation discrepancies may be found among the responses. The staff refrained from over-editing so that the “spirit” of the original messages would be maintained. We have not in any way censored these responses for content, and as such, cannot vouch for their veracity or accuracy.

*Senate Fiscal Services Staff
March 19, 2001*

Cut The Fat e-mails received as of 9/11/00:

I am a teacher in East Baton Rouge Parish, and I feel that the State Department of Education is too large. Let's cut back to minimum.

Every time we talk about cutting back on budget, somebody whines about the fact that we will be cutting back on services. We have too many services now. We need to do more for ourselves. I try to teach that to my students daily.

Department of Education - Finance. Required Service Forms which private schools are required to complete in excruciating detail to be reimbursed for services required by the state. There is an audit department which audits these forms ad nauseum to insure that all of the time claimed by schools is "acceptable and within the guidelines". Instead of employing people to do this busy work to "save" a relatively few dollars (I would bet that the personnel audit time and associated office overhead completely offsets any savings that may be had), perhaps the State could utilize well accepted statistical norms and allow the schools to use the norm and avoid the time and expense of this bureaucratic task and the cumbersome time consuming audit process. Even the IRS lets us do this for mileage reimbursements. Surely we can come up with a streamlined way of providing these reimbursements. Please don't respond with "courts require this". The people who make their living satisfying the requirements of the courts have a vested interest in making things as complicated as possible - in other words job security. The interpretation of the law and/or decisions of courts can be changed when a lawyer really wants to make a change! Thank you.

Stop building bridges in the middle of nowhere.

Stop building stadiums for baseball owners.

Stop building practice facilities for football team owners.

If you kill the Harrah's deal by demanding more taxes than they can pay, you will loose even more revenues.

Demos verses Repubs! STOP the division and start working together .

Cut out the personal pork!

Why does Coke get a tax break to build a new facility while the taxes on my small business are raised to offset your needs?

WAKE UP! GO TO WORK!

Installing time clocks for state employees might cost money on the onset, but over the years would pay off in increased productivity. I see employees arriving to work 10, 20, 25 minutes late and taking 1-2 hour lunches even though our division only gets 30 minutes for lunch. Employees are pulling out of the parking lot 10, 15, 20 minutes early at the end of the day. I am sure that this is occurring all over the State system. Many hours are being wasted that the State is paying for just because there is no system in place

for accountability of time. Break times are being abused...many employees come to work, then want to go eat breakfast and take 20-30 minutes to eat breakfast. I was taught that you eat breakfast BEFORE you arrive to work; not expect to eat after you arrive to work.

Prohibit persons who handle outgoing mail from sealing envelopes with Scotch tape. We're already paying for envelopes with their own sealant. How much money does the state pay every year for Scotch tape?

I propose using prison trustee inmates to cut grass, pick up litter along all US roadways, and do some doing minor road repairs/maintenance. Parish police juries are a total waste of money, State(DOT) road workers do a pitiful job filling pot holes, and maintaining state roads. Our interstate's medians always need cutting and cleaning. Local drainage ditches and canals are silted in, obstructed with debris or grown over with weeds. Let's replace the dead heads with trustees who want to get outside and do something positive/constructive (repay their debt to society). Thank You Very Much.

Consider merging the Wildlife and Fisheries into State Parks under the Lieutenant Governor, as is done in other states. Eliminate jobs where the employee does not give a day's work for a day's wages. What comes to mind with this immediately are the employees of DOTD who ride around and "watch" jobs being done. A tree was recently removed from a right-of-way near my home and seven trucks showed up; there were employees standing around all over the place watching.

I would like to suggest that as long as we have prisoners being housed, clothed and fed at our, the general tax paying public's, expense, no state buildings/grounds should be allowed to go unattended.

To take it a step further, no state agency should be paying an outside firm to do any janitorial, maintenance, or gardening work. It could and should be performed by our "guests".

One argument against this would be the age old "but, that would put working people out of jobs." Maybe, in some cases, but, then again these same "guests" would need escorts, drivers, etc., thus providing other jobs.

Someone I know who works at the Pennington Biomedical Center tells me that cases of perfectly good non-perishable food is thrown away every day in the dumpster. Pennington Biomedical buys cereal, snack food and other such items in order to perform their nutrition research and they simply throw away the unopened and non-stale food because it is unneeded. It sounds like a similar situation to the prescription drugs at nursing homes that were flushed down the toilet until you guys jumped in and changed

the law. Perhaps there is a statutory restriction that prevents this waste, but it would sure help fill up the Food Bank if you guys could look into it.

I am assuming you would also consider how to make money for the state: how about raising the burial licenses from \$2.00 to about \$10.00 - several funeral directors have mentioned this??? Also: 2003 Bicentennial year for Louisiana - license plates???

Government agencies might save money by observing the same rules of energy efficiency that most of us do at home:

1) Keep the thermostat set to 78 degrees in the summer and 68 degrees in the winter. I've noticed thermostats in government buildings set to 60 degrees in the summer.

2) Keep water heaters set to 170 degrees. One could brew coffee with the hot tap water in some buildings. That's a safety hazard and a waste of money.

3) Buy and encourage the use of more fuel-efficient vehicles. Several state agencies use Suburbans. These are great trucks for hauling lots of people or heavy loads (like big boats), but they're also one of the least efficient vehicles on the road. I've often seen these government Suburbans on the road with only one or two passengers and no load to tow.

Hello committee to cut the fat:

As a Libertarian, I think I would be able to cut a tremendous amount of fat from the La. budget. Also, like an over-bulked muscle man, I could come up with cuts to the over developed muscle of the La. Budget!!! I am not sure that the La. Legislature is really serious about doing this but assuming they are, I will 1st recommend that you contact the Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank that could give you some innovative ideas. Go to www.cato.org for your 1st effort. I will be writing again very soon with some specifics.

Louisiana could save over \$92,700,000 in the Medicaid Program by privatizing those ICF/MR facilities presently operated by the Department of Health and Hospitals. Presently, DHH serves about half of the developmentally disabled individuals who need residential living, and private providers serve the rest. DHH sets rates in all of these facilities. Private day rates are set on a scale using level of care, while rates for public facilities are set far above the private rates. Public rates have increased dramatically over the past three years, while private rates have remained more stable.

One of the issues used by DHH to promote the public rate increases seen in recent years has been the investigation of some of the DHH facilities by the Justice Department. This is another good argument for privatization of these facilities. \$92,700,000 in Medicaid dollars would go a long way towards solving some of the needs of families who want to serve their own relatives at home but just need a little help. I ask that you

consider the need for an aggressive approach to the problems in the developmental disabilities services system, and work towards privatizing the DHH operated facilities.

The Governor can cut back to one press secretary, one appointment secretary and one correspondence secretary. All other people working in his office can go. He probably needs a driver

I know of several hundreds of acres of land in Iberville Parish that the state of La. owns, I think because of non-payment of taxes. Is there an inventory of what acreage La. owns? Probably it's in the thousands if not millions of acres excluding state parkland. Why can't all of that land be put up for sale to the highest bidder and clear out unnecessary, unused and uncared for land and generate some income for the state?

People want services; to cut government means to cut services. It is popular to reduce government if it doesn't affect "ME." However, as an employee of a state agency, the multiple steps, lack of use of digital technology to transmit forms, and micromanaging under the guise of "Accountability" means that our "knowledge workers" are pushing paper. I would like for public service to mean again serving people, solving problems, helping with long-term goals. Meet with the "worker bees" and let them tell you how to make government more efficient. The paperwork is NOT always necessary just so everyone can feel important....it takes 5 signatures — five secretaries logging in and logging out paperwork — just to leave (on my own time, no comp time) on a Sunday evening to begin work on a Monday morning at 8, four or five hours away. That is over kill.

Use an income qualifier for the TOPS program. Make the cut-off very high so the middle class can still take advantage of the program. The middle class shouldn't be paying tuition for wealthy people's children to attend college.

Reduce all State government employment rolls other than teachers by 30%.

I am a teacher in Louisiana and I do have some ideas to share. Is this where I should list them? Also, I would like to have a break down of where the money in LA is spent. Is there a simple break down you could provide? This would be helpful. Thank you. More suggestions will come when I receive the requested information (above), but here are some.

1. The TOPS scholarship should be awarded to students who have attained Sophomore status (after Freshmen are weeded out). These students will have proven themselves strong enough to go the extra that it takes to graduate. If TOPS students quit school to have a baby, get married or anything other than illness, they should not be

entitled to keep the scholarship (which is NOT the case now). This will save money and be a more effective means of handling the scholarship.

2. The State Dept. of Education desperately needs to be cleaned out. There are far too many people working there and after asking a simple question to 5 or 6 different departments about a law, none could find the answer! This was very sad. Also, I understand that an audit was performed and the results were not good. Please get to the bottom of this disaster. It seems that in this Dept. that the right hand definitely doesn't know what the left hand is doing. Too much money is wasted. Our children and teachers are at stake in this state. What a tragedy! This can be corrected now.

3. Our members of the Legislature gave themselves raises for many years in the past, while allowing teachers and others to work for a minimum salary and not such good raises. Most of these members are attorneys, insurance agents or have other incomes and do not need such a high salary. The cuts should come here first. They would laugh if teachers could vote their own raises, but yet they do that very thing.

4. We need to compare our State finances to other states and learn how others do better and where they cut. How can other states pay teachers more yet have responsible budgets and less financial trouble? They do it and we need to find out how they do it.

5. Utilize technology as much as possible and lessen State employees.

6. Louisiana has sold itself down the river (literally) by giving in to the Riverboats. This form of revenue has not proven effective financially. Why not? What about the Lottery? Where is all of that money going? The more of this kind of thing we allow in the State, the more broke we seem to get. Why? Now that this hasn't worked, let's focus on more productive ways of making money and diversify our economy.

We have a rich heritage. The legislature needs to stop being controlled by special interest groups and focus on the most important aspects of the state-it's people. This means, trim the fat and focus on improving teacher salaries, schools, and the environment. In time, the students in this state will improve the quality of life here and help to solve the problems through their own education. However, if we keep going like we are, the students are not going into education and are leaving this state when they do. We are losing the brightest students to other states, too. This might be why we are having trouble solving our own internal problems. Thank you for the opportunity of expressing my ideas to you. We, the people of Louisiana, trust you to balance our budget and use our tax money wisely. Making more money through taxation has not ever been the answer because ways are found to spend more. I do support the Stelly bill as it may be the only way to improve education and teacher salaries.

According to the Child Welfare Service budget, some 2,628 children are taken from families each year. The following quote comes from their own statement.

"Approximately 2,628 children enter foster care each year. Approximately ninety-eight percent of those entering the foster care system is because of suspected child abuse, neglect or exploitation. State courts place approximately 2,500 children into the custody of the Office of Community Services each year, resulting in an ongoing foster care population of approximately 6,100 children."

Let me focus your attention on one particular word in that statement - "suspected." Originally, this office was to take children away from families ONLY when

such abuse, neglect or exploitation was PROVEN. The LAST resort was to physically remove the child. The PRIMARY purpose of any intervention was to MAINTAIN the family.

When 2,600+ children are taken away from their families (213 per month, 7 per day) on suspicion, we have allowed state monies to be terribly misspent.

According to a recent report that Carmen Weisner sent Rep. Kenny, out of 2458 children who LEFT foster care, 1137 of them were returned to their parents. For those 1137 families, it would have been better if CWS/CPS would never have been involved other than a preliminary investigation. That same report indicates that some the disposition of some 337 cases is UNKNOWN at this time.

The program itself gives rise to abuse of the system. And, indeed, abuse of the system is exactly the problem in Louisiana today.

Preliminary investigations should yield reports that the child is in IMMEDIATE danger before he/she is removed from the family. EVERY means must be used to MAINTAIN the family before a child is removed. I suggest that in this \$81 million+ budget there is AMPLE room for cuts.

Eliminate the Black and Rural caucus slush funds. Eliminate paying Legislators if they are not present in Baton Rouge, in or out of session. I follow CB Forgotson's excellent watching of the leges. I consider him pretty much on target. If this keeps up this mullet will have to move to Texas. Read My Lips: NO NEW TAXES. Reduce the per pupil expenditure and give the money to the teachers. Thousands of pupils failed to show up for the first day of school in this state. I don't think the teachers did any such thing.

It is confusing to most people that Louisiana has such a critical budget problem while the country as a whole is enjoying tremendous growth and prosperity. We might consider having leaders from states that are doing fine serve as consultants and policy makers and eliminate the current crop of Louisiana policy makers who seem to have failed.

The Louisiana Representatives and Senators should take a reduction in pay this fiscal year to help with the state's budget.

1. Limit the amount of accrued vacation and sick leave that can be carried over from one budget year to the next. I currently recommend my clients adopt policies that require employees to use or lose their vacation time. Any unused sick leave is forfeited. When you're dealing with annual appropriations the budget ends at the end of a certain period. Allowing a carryover of the unused leave is effectively spending next year's (or other future year's) funds on events that have occurred now. I believe the current policy is too liberal and costly. Reduce or eliminate the amount of leave that can be carried over.

2. Grants are made to entities that have no business getting them. First, the people who manage them have no concept of complying with the terms of the contract. Many entities are run by people that have no training in business. They are happy to get the money so they can survive. Quite often the results they forecast in the proposals do not come close to happening. Of course, I don't audit performance so I can't comment in my audits. Consider the following:

- Make it mandatory for any first time agency getting a state award to send their director and bookkeeper to a training seminar on how to manage and account for state grants.
- Have the agency granting the award follow up with an onsite visit after 3 months to see if the grantee is properly managing the grant - look at their accounting system and check results against the proposal - do not wait until year end.
- Consider granting funds only to proven agencies and agencies that can minimize administration costs because they are already managing other grants. Quite often a small agency will get a grant and it will go towards administration costs for the most part.

3. There are a bunch of late payers. You will always have them. Consider having any company that will be paying sales tax and withholding taxes post bonds for specified amounts depending on forecasted and past experience. If the company doesn't pay, then the risk is assumed by the bonding companies. They will eventually get rid of the companies who are stealing trust fund type dollars.

Cost Saving Cuts –

Reduce the number of vehicles being used statewide from ALL departments. This would save on fuel, maintenance and repairs.

Reduce the number of "new vehicles" being purchased. Some agencies are replacing vehicles that are only two year's old regardless of mileage. Set a mileage limit of 100,000 miles and stick with it no matter the position of the personnel. Do it by example.

Restrict the number of personally assigned vehicles for all agencies. Increase the motor pools but cut back on "personal assigned" vehicles.

The irony is that employees will be laid off to save the State money, but yet new cars are being purchased or leased by public officials.

To reduce the amount costs for insurance premiums paid by state agencies it is suggested that drivers of state vehicles be required to pay a percentage for the repair of damages to the vehicle that they are driving, when involved in an accident, and they are at "fault." This would reduce the growing amount of premiums paid to the Office of Risk Management by cutting the dollar amount having to be paid for by the state both in repairs and in premiums.

Stop hiring so many consultants, outside attorneys and outside professional people when these areas can be addressed by state employees/officials.

No one ever wants to cut law enforcement or correctional officers. But the question is what are these officers bringing to the state in dollars or is it necessary for each "camp" at Angola to have its own Warden and Assistant Warden and etc. All these

jobs are high paying jobs. The same applies to State Police with all the new positions for lieutenant colonels and all the lower rank beneath them.

Increase "beer & liquor" fees. The State can bring in large sums of monies for these increases.

In closing, have the State Official to lead by example whether by words.

I am a public school educator and member of A+PEL. It has been rather curious to me that while the LRS (Louisiana Rehabilitative Services) has experienced a severe budget overrun with a resulting cutback (therefore, services are extremely limited), how can they justify their extensive staff that was needed when fully funded

The opportunity, at last, for the input of people, i.e., state employees, who are in a position to know first-hand of the colossal waste which occurs in the day-to-day operations of state government is appreciated. Unfortunately, too many of these employees contribute to the waste, and are either allowed or encouraged to do so by management. This incredible state of affairs is so entrenched, it could be termed "LA state civil service culture."

For example, when I worked at the Corrections Dept., Adult Probation and Parole, at the end of '98, the purchasing director actually and actively encouraged his employees to WALK to other offices — in other buildings — instead of using the phone, office mail or e-mail! During these trips, personal vs. business dialogue predominated. Nor did there seem any necessity to hurry back to work in our own office either physically or mentally.

This mindset of state employment as more of a social club than a place of work is pervasive among state departments, and was even more graphically illustrated by an employee of Corrections, Juvenile Probation & Parole. Instead of training me, her purported task at the moment, she took a personal call, sat ATOP her desk, and discussed at length and at her leisure the alcoholism problem of some man, while I sat idle, waiting for her, until I left in disgust. Of course, she was still on the phone and didn't attempt to stop me.

A final example at Corrections, among still others: During the X-mas holidays, when the purchasing director was scheduled to work, he read a magazine the entire day, attempting to hide it whenever I entered his office to ask a question. Another of his employees, scheduled to work, visited other employees' offices all day instead, making an appearance in her own and in the director's offices only at the end of the day, when and where she pronounced herself bored. The director obviously thought this behavior acceptable.

The next state department where I worked, DHH, OPH, Children's Special Health Services, Baton Rouge region, the latter half of '99, was decidedly worse. Not only did its employees behave as if their work place were a social club, they actually voiced ENTITLEMENT to this practice — "Why does the regional(governing) office (which is

housed at another location) have to know what we do?!"--and appeared ready to fight to the death for this "right" to play at will.

What they did, regularly, was stop working at the drop of a hat, form a circle comprised of half the employees in the building and socialize to the volume and length desired. Indeed, the lengths of time allotted for work and coffee breaks are reversed there.

As mentioned, it is my belief that this attitude toward and practice of state government employment and "work" is rampant throughout state departments. The solution is obviously to reverse the situation: Get rid of the dead wood, regardless of rank and seniority, and replace it with employees who possess a work ethic, as evidenced by their CONTINUED observance of long-evolved work practices already supposedly civil service rules. When they become infected with the "civil service culture," replace them with a new crop until they--and civil service--get the message.

I prefer to leave the homestead exemption alone. There are many families on fixed incomes and families struggling to make ends meet. We do not need another cost added to our households.

I just graduated from the Louisiana Tech. College, Gulf Area Campus. I would like to say that for the 18 mos. that I was there I saw a way for the school itself to help with some state reimbursement. The school while I was there purchased computers on two occasions, the older computers that were replaced are sitting at the school in a building, and in classrooms not being used. I know that the federal and state government pays for the new computers. So I feel that instead of the older, unused computers going to waste while waiting for the state to decide to sell them at an auction in about 5 to 6 years from now, why not resell the computer to the students who attend the colleges, because there are students that can not afford to go out and purchase a new computer.

The state or the college could sell the computer to the students for 100.00 to 200.00 dollars, instead of them going to waste, because by the time the state decides to sell them at an auction they have to sell them really cheap because they are so outdated. By selling them to the students it helps the students apply themselves to the programs that are being thought to them by the school, and also help regain some money for the colleges or the state. By the time that new computers are purchase to replace the older one, the older ones have already been depreciated by the state or college with the IRS, so then all that I can see is a waste. Why not try to regain some money and in the process help the students learn.

The concept that I and others are promoting is one which creates responsible individuals that will ultimately produce much more than they use; thus becoming a positive influence on society rather than a negative one. The following recommendations are not original in the sense that I am introducing them for the first time. Many of these ideas were utilized in Japan in 1941 to encourage more stable families and increase the birthrate in a responsible way. A catalyst for development is contained in the Encyclical,

Evangelium Vitae, Section 90, the last paragraph which states that " A family policy must be the basis and driving force of all social policies." These ideas are unique in so far as they have never been seriously considered or implemented on a large scale by any government than Japan.

Two of the premises that these solutions are based on are that the traditional family has the most positive effect on society and that large families are not only reasonable but also offer some special benefits to society.

These concepts are as old as time itself since newlyweds received special treatment in the Old Testament. These couples were exempted from public service for one year. "When a man is newly married and is drafted into military or any other public duty; he is to be excused from duty for one year, so that he can stay home and make his wife happy." (Deut. 24:5)

With this in mind, here are some suggested policies designed to remedy the family problems of present day Louisiana.

Give first-time newlyweds a duty-free status for one year to escape all taxes: income tax, car tax, property tax, fishing and hunting licenses, sales taxes at the supermarket, drugstore, at restaurants and on air travel. A copy of the marriage license could be submitted along with sales receipts in order to receive a refund on all taxes and licenses purchased during the first year of marriage.

Special government housing loans for qualified newlyweds should be available which would be reduced 20 % for each child born. These policies provide marriage with economic support and social glamour not available to couples living in casual and consensual unions.

(1)Municipal, state and federal property tax rates should be restructured to facilitate private ownership of land.

(2)Divorced and remarried couples would not qualify for the one year tax exemption and special loan - first marriages only.

For each child born, one additional year of tax exemption would be granted. To encourage healthy child spacing, the exemption begins 18 months or more after the previous birth and exemption is lost for the months a child is conceived before that time. This would help parents who are concerned about the strain caused by the birth of a child and would offer them some financial security.

Preferential rights should be given to families with three or more children especially and specifically through tax reduction, honors, rewards and public recognition for large families. A voucher system should be developed for mothers who have three or more children that could be used for not only school tuition at the school of their choice but medical insurance, principal and interest on housing loans, taxes and social security. These vouchers would be qualified for by performing a minimum number of hours monthly in listed community service projects or work in her immediate and extended family. For example, care for the elderly in her home or other homes and/or care for her own and other nursery children. The rates should not make bearing children into a profit making business, but should enable parents who work hard and manage well to have a large family if they so desire. By sending these vouchers to mothers, the community exhibits and acknowledges deserved appreciation for the mothers' contribution to family and community upkeep.

Divorce should be discouraged by withholding wages, to automatically pay alimony and child care support in divorce proceedings. In the case of the unwed mother where the paternity is identified, the same automatic wage withholding should be enforced.

An immediate and direct improvement to our health care system would be the high priority encouragement of mothers to breast feed. The multiple studies over the past decades, overwhelmingly indicating the substantial positive benefits to every aspect of the individual's development from breastfeeding over formula feeding, mandate that efforts be directed to increase the level of participation on the part of new mothers.

(3) Nursing mothers who ecologically breast feed (on demand and exclusively for six months) should receive vouchers which could be used for food and medicine purchases equivalent to the average spent on formula for non-breast fed children for the duration of the nursing up to eighteen months. The family should receive discounted rates for health insurance similar to discounts on car insurance when an individual takes driver's education or puts in smoke detectors or dead bolts. Health insurance utilization would be greatly reduced if infants are ecologically breast fed.

Since studies also show that this form of breast feeding inhibits ovulation in most cases for at least six months, no contraceptives would be needed and the use of very effective and extremely healthy family planning method - Natural Family Planning or Natural Fertility Regulation- would be much easier to accomplish. The promotion of NFP as the only responsible method of family Planning is of the essence in this scenario if the maximum benefits to the family and society are to be achieved. The reason being that every other artificial means of family planning currently available whether it be chemical or barrier is fraught with side-effects, dangers and negative effects on the individual and society. Study after study have implicated physical and psychological problems as well as an increase in the divorce rate with all artificial contraceptive methods and sterilization whereas the opposite correlation has been shown with NFP users.

One of the arguments against promoting Natural Family Planning as a viable family planning option is that if NFP were offered as a method of family planning by governmental agencies, and given equal or even preferential treatment, how could it be implemented? What will we do with all the extra children, the erroneous supposition being that NFP would result in many method failures with the resulting increase in birthrate.

The latter supposition that NFP implementation will result in many method failures has been laid to rest by numerous studies available in contemporary medical literature and research publications. That fact cannot be denied by people of good faith but who are genuinely concerned about acceptance. Acceptance of NFP can be relatively easily accomplished by using the same guidelines that have been used to promote other forms of family planning including artificial contraception and sterilization and every other policy that governments wish to implement - MONEY!!!

Tax credits or vouchers should be issued for those couples using NFP rather than other artificial forms of contraception equivalent to the average yearly cost of those contraceptives paid for by the government.

Please note that none of these programs increase government expenditures; they merely reduce revenues. How much do such programs cost in reduced revenues? Very roughly:(using national figures which can be extrapolated for Louisiana specifics) if we

figure an average of \$5000 for the first year tax-license exemption for newlyweds, that runs to about \$10 billion for 2 million newlyweds. Then \$20 billion for the 4 million annual baby crop (an average \$5000 a year average for vouchers for breast feeding and use of NFP). Add another \$5 billion for vouchers for child and elderly care and other sundry service vouchers but subtract \$5 billion for institution for elderly and day care savings and another \$30 billion saved by improved infant health both short and long term, because of breast feeding, reduction of aid to dependent mothers and children because of more responsible men and fathers entering into permanent marriages and the entire program ends up costing nothing.

Since sex education has not reduced but in fact escalated the problems intended to have been solved by mandated sex education programs, the status of such programs should be changed to a voluntary basis. The discretion to alter or abandon the programs altogether should be left to local school boards. Any program adopted should have Chastity as its central theme. The Governor's Program on Abstinence and the current initiatives to develop School clubs using abstinence based curriculum is an excellent concept which will eventually produce magnificent results.

Finally, children should be given the right to vote from birth, with the parents exercising this for them until they reach the age at which they can vote for themselves. After all, families are the most basic human society, and it is they who form legitimate governments for the sake of procuring their welfare. This arrangement would strengthen the political clout of larger families.

I think that there are too many universities in Louisiana. At least the numerous branch campuses should be closed, perhaps consolidated into the community college system. In addition, the administrative costs and personnel policies at all levels of education should be closely examined.

Try this, cut all supervisory positions that do not directly supervise at least 4 people. Look at the organization charts!! They are full of people who are directly supervising two, three and often just one person. That is not management!!!!!! Those people don't have anything to do except make work for others. You always demand position cuts, but they always cut out the workers. That leaves you with expensive supervisors who are bosses to one or two people. Go through a department's org chart and cut the positions that don't spread out over at least 4 people. Most departments have straight line charts, one person managing one person. Cut them out, then you will have a leaner, meaner workforce and probably more work will get done, without all those managers standing around getting in the real workers way. You probably don't want to make those kind of waves though.

Cut The Fat E-mails Received as of 9/20/00:

Here's my suggestion for BIG savings in state government. Create a unicameral legislative body and reduce the number of legislators in the process. Put stricter term limits in place. Then put them on strict "results based" compensation program. In other words the less legislation they enact, the more money they make. Hope this helps.

1. Why does the gaming board hearing office have two part time (ex-judges) as hearing officers? The caseload has been very light for a year or more, one would do. By the way, the setup is unauthorized anyway, as the law requires a full time hearing officer who may hire part time help if needed (see La. R.S.27:25 "...and SHALL be a full time employee of the Board"). Sounds like a cush job for old friends of somebody, so that they can still maintain a private practice.

2. Why does the Board have two attorneys employed by it when La. R.S. 27:19 states that "The attorney general or his designee SHALL be the legal advisor and legal representative of the board"? Why not make them all employees of the Board or all AAGs? Why do we need both? Sounds like a cush job for old employees of somebody.

3. Look at the hours kept by AAG's, particularly in gaming and civil division. They NEED time clocks. Don't believe me? Call during business hours and see who's there and who's not, esp. on Fridays.

Good luck, you will need it. Maybe you should solicit suggestions regarding those areas of state govt. that DO work, and economically, so as to learn how they are doing it and use it as a model.

What essential services does state government have to provide according to the constitution? All other services should be abolished. Many citizens are extremely displeased at having to work hard to pay for taxes that go to give away programs for those who choose not to work.

Louisiana has far too many four year colleges with duplicative degree programs. We should reorganize all higher education in Louisiana and do away with the geographical political patronage system for state universities.

"To wit: There should be one place to get a degree in accounting, one campus teaching engineering, one campus offering degrees in architecture, one for agriculture, etc. We have eight different state universities offering a degree in marketing. Why? Why not consolidate all into one campus? Would that not also improve the quality of the education with all of the marketing gurus together in the same building?

"We could also convert three or four of the four year colleges into community colleges that would serve as feeder schools for the remaining four year colleges.

"This concept would be politically difficult, but not impossible. The potential savings are in the hundreds of millions of dollars per year."

The general consensus that "state workers" are not doing their job is, for the most part a misconception. However, this misconception by the public is a result of the

members of the legislature attempting to blame their budget failures on those least able to defend themselves. State workers are vastly underpaid. Compare their positions to the private sector and one would wonder why it would be expected that these employees would feel an obligation to go the extra mile. Please note that I did not say the state workers are over worked. Because of the civil service system an advance in pay can only be obtained if the employee is a supervisors. This requires lots of extra people to keep the system going.

I suggest the state pay workers in accordance with their education and responsibility. Cut the work force, but pay workers accordingly. The way I see it, this state pays state workers for about 20 hours of work a week and that's about what the state gets. The work is getting done, there is not enough work for the number employed. I also suggest you look at unclassified positions. For instance, in the thick of the budget crisis, the governor hired a legislative liaison for the DOTD. Mr. Dardenne, please talk to state workers directly and they can tell you how to make state departments run more efficiently.

I read the article in today's Advocate and I would like to make suggestions on areas the state might want to look into.

Study the salaries of Classified Civil Service state employees vs. Unclassified state employees. There are numerous Classified Civil Employees performing the same tasks as many unclassified state employees and the classified employees are paid substantially lower than the unclassified employee performing the same tasks. For years the Civil Service pay scales have been adjusted, however, there are job titles, particularly in the accounting administrative field that need to be adjusted or adjust unclassified employees salaries lower.

From my years of experience in state government, unclassified employees are politically hired and begin at obscene salaries are awarded extremely high raises. I would suggest look at the salaries unclassified employees in the accounting field and other fields compared to employees the accounting field and similar fields under civil service. There is a tremendous difference.

Also, the pay scale at Civil Service needs to be upgraded to maintain employees in job titles. The way the system is structured, an employee learns to "work the system" and will either be reallocated for a higher salary or test and seek employment elsewhere in order to make a decent salary to live on. This causes a tremendous turnover in some positions, particularly the lower GS levels like clerical and professional entry positions.

Bottom, line, research the classified salaries vs. unclassified salaries and then decide. However, I'm not sure if the suggestion will be taken seriously because all employees at the Legislature are unclassified.

The legislature needs to find a way to have the athletic department share some of the money they make with the rest of LSU and then LSU wouldn't be asking the legislature for money so often. The athletic department is a part of LSU and some of their money should go to LSU. You can bet that if the rest of LSU had plenty of money and the athletic department needed money to improve their program that a way would be

found to do it. I like LSU athletics; the athletic department just needs to share their money. Anyone with asthma can't even go into the LSU library. I can smell the dust and mold from the library before I open the outer door much less the inner door much less actually enter the library. After I'm in there 10 minutes I have to get out. There's plenty of money for athletics though.

Also, try to get other companies to help repair some of the old buildings on the LSU campus. Aren't there enough LSU fans to help out the school? You see groups go into poor neighborhoods to help clean up and repair houses. Can't something be done for LSU? It has dirty, old, crumpling buildings too. LSU needs some good contractors to adopt it as a charity.

Require demonstration of basic understanding of management principles, before allowing promotion to management.

Every business day over 60,000 state employees receive junk mail. Get the Division of Administration to develop a strategy to eliminate tons of junk mail to State Offices. I simply asked the junk mail companies to remove my name and address from their mailing lists. Today, I do not receive junk mail. If every state employee and state office did this, we could reduce the mail load by one or two truckloads per day.

I have been sitting on this idea for quite some time now, not knowing who to tell. I just saw the article in the Advocate about the "Cut the Fat." Here's my suggestion:

Earl K. Long Hospital, and all other State run hospitals wind up having to purchase blood from private business blood centers. This very same private business blood center comes to many, many state agencies and draws blood for state workers. While we may not be able to dictate to a state employee where or who they can donate their blood to; we should be able to stop the solicitation of non state business' on state property to draw this blood. If you would check the amount of blood these state hospital have to purchase you will be truly amazed at that expense.

By only allowing state hospitals on the properties to draw blood would drastically boost the amount of blood to these hospitals, other positive effects are: A) cutting cost, B) possibly increasing revenues by the sale of excess blood.

Will it cause bad publicity that the state is "depriving" the community of vitally needed blood, I think not when you publicize what you're saving the taxpayers and bring out the fact they draw blood from thousands of people at private industry.

Do I have a vendetta against the blood bank here? Not at all, donating blood is a very good cause, I'm a state worker who's just sick of seeing the waste in state government.

Cut TOPS. If the end of this program is to retain Louisiana's best and brightest, I don't see how it helps. The best and brightest get scholarships to go to top schools.

Moreover, if the state lacks high-paying, high-skill jobs, the best and brightest are not going to stay regardless of whether they graduated from a state school.

It seems to me that this program should be means tested — why should the state subsidize the education of someone who certainly can afford it? Whatever you saved could go to fund teacher pay raises which might help improve our pathetic K-12 system, which not coincidentally is precisely what we need to do if we are ever going to attract top flight jobs here.

Glad to hear someone is at least looking at ways to cut expenses because I am not voting for any more taxes; therefore, the State needs to figure out how to operate on its current budget.

1. Eliminate the Governor's slush funds. There is no accountability for these funds and it is simply a legal way to buy votes.
2. Eliminate the funds for Senators and Representatives to send constituent newsletters. If I want to read what is going on - I will read the newspaper or check the internet. Once again - it is tax payer funded campaign funds.
3. The State Employee Group Benefit Program is running \$100-\$120 million in the red and they will soon be asking for the taxpayers to bail out this disaster of a benefit plan. In fact, at the last Board Meeting they were already trying to figure out how to ask the Governor for more money. The Board has repeatedly refused to implement a number of benefit changes that would save the plan millions of dollars, as published by their own Benefit and Rate Committee. If they aren't willing to adopt a "closed formulary" like every other major insurer has done which will save \$5 million or put a \$150 deductible on prescription benefits which will save \$16.3 million (their own numbers, not mine) then I am sorry but they created this problem and the taxpayer should not have to pay for their decisions.

I know you have a difficult job because every time you close a health unit you have people complaining. Well, all I can say is when times are tough - you have to cut back no matter how much it hurts.

It has been more than 10 years since I was a state government employee so what I am about to say may not be relevant. Hopefully something has already been done to correct this problem. And what I am talking about is budgetary units spending money uselessly at the end of a fiscal year in order not to turn money back to the state.

The incentive, to spend all the money budgeted, was because if you had any surplus left over at the end of the year you ran the risk of having your budget cut the following year. Also the general feeling was if the state gave us all this money to spend we might as well spend it. This resulted in such wasteful spending as buying back-up calculators and computers (yes, back-up) and a new color copier even though we just bought a new copier the previous year and very seldom, if ever, needed color.

Again, I apologize because I have been out of this so long but I seem to remember hearing, at the time, that the state of Georgia had an incentive program for budgetary units which rewarded them for returning funds to the state instead of penalizing them. Although I was a state employee I was also a Louisiana tax payer, and so were my family and friends, and it really bugged me to see tax money wasted like that.

The focus of our efforts to improve LA's educational system seems to target the "Southern Regional Average" as the benchmark for teacher pay, test scores, etc. I recommend that every department of state government should be scrutinized by the same standards (compare them to the Southern regional average for their counterpart). It may seem simplistic, but we need to start somewhere.

If you take a walk in a state building on Friday afternoon you find that most if the employees are missing. I recently had business at the DNR and went looking for a person on Friday afternoon only to find that they had not returned from lunch. After several inquiries as to who could help me, I finally got to the supervisor of the department. What a lucky day! I got my problem solved without having to wade through a mile of red tape. But I got to thinking — If, as it appeared, half the people in the department took four hours off each Friday afternoon, that would be roughly 5% of the working hours of a department. (1/2 of 10% of a 40 hour work week) Maybe we are 5% overstaffed, or maybe we could be a lot more efficient if everyone worked a whole week.

By the way, part of my business with that supervisor required that we call the Corps of Engineers in New Orleans for some information, and we found the same problem there. No one home.

To provide more funding for public higher education without increasing taxes, just eliminate the eligibility of PRIVATE institutions (not subject to the Board of Regents authority) to compete for state \$\$\$ through BORSF grants, endowed chairs, etc. PRIVATE institutions should be eligible, if at all, ONLY for R&D projects in the Industrial Ties Research program. About ONE-FOURTH of the BORSF \$\$\$ have gone to PRIVATE (many with religious ties) institutions to pay for equipment, grad students' stipends, endowed professorships/chairs, etc. (One day some diligent journalist will dig into this and let the public know what's been happening with the trust fund money. The Board of Regents reports are designed to CONCEAL the siphoning off of \$\$\$ to private universities).

This is obscene, given the shortage of funds for the State's public universities. Only in Louisiana would the taxpayers be funding wealthy private institutions at the expense of public universities. Legislators will whine "that's the way the fund (LEQSF) was set up" (by whom???), but this situation can be changed by revising administrative guidelines to severely limit the amount that can go the private institutions in any year or category.

I am a state government employee (4 years) in an administrative field (undergrad and master's degrees). I would like to make several suggestions I hope you find helpful.

1. There are too many 4 year universities. Let's look at the ones in the Baton Rouge area offering essentially the same courses (duplication of effort). LSU-BR, Southern-BR, Southern-NO, Southeastern, University of Louisiana at Lafayette, and UNO to name a few. There might be more in the Baton Rouge area, but I think our state should reduce the number of four year universities and build a junior college system that feeds a few MAJOR universities instead of attempting to have 13 or 14 four-year universities statewide. Education is important (I got my education at LSU), but we have to draw the line somewhere.

2. Slush funds ... need I say more? The Advocate has a really good article about the Orleans Parish fund that slipped through in the last session. If something is important enough for the state to fund it, then give the money to a state department and create a program. Most state employees refer to the slush funds as giveaways, which Louisiana cannot afford.

3. We should consider a consolidated administration. Why can't the state have one accounting office, one purchasing office, etc.? Each department has its own accountants, purchasing agents, budget staff, computer staff, etc. These functions should be consolidated at DOA. Louisiana is one big organization. As it stands now, each of the departments acts on its own to fulfill its administrative needs, creating a lot of waste. Why don't we have a state government LAN (local area network) in the downtown area instead of employing hundreds of information technology workers to support a LAN at each state department? I think cost savings with a consolidated administration would be endless. Additionally, the administrative employees (accountants, budgeting, purchasing, auditing, etc..) are treated like red-headed step children at most state departments. Maybe a consolidated administration would reduce turnover by treating administrative staff like valued professionals.

4. Why do we need a house of representatives and a senate? Louisiana needs a smaller group of legislators that won't have several hundred personal agendas to bog down the legislative process. Proof of this statement can be found with the three sessions it took to get a budget for this fiscal year (that included \$20-30 million in slush funds when services and jobs were being cut).

5. Study private industry administrative practices and other state government practices and change Louisiana government to something that works. We tend to get caught up by "I've always done it this way". Just because something has been done for 20 years doesn't make it the best way to do it. Also, offer bonuses to employees who offer suggestions that improve a process or make a difference. Private industry does it all the time (it encourages efficiency).

6. Reduce state government employees by providing retirement incentives like private industry does when it downsizes. Don't layoff employees with less than 10 years in service, they are the future of state government. If and when a reduction in force occurs, use the opportunity to evaluate the functions state government provides and REORGANIZE based on priority.

7. Cut the number of secretaries. A large majority of supervisors don't have computer skills and depend on secretaries to get their work done.

8. State government is owed taxes, fines, etc., by a number of people and businesses. The state should have a collections office to coordinate these debts. Wildlife and Fisheries has several million in fines that are uncollectible because they are under \$50 and it would cost more to collect the fines than would be received. If a citizen owes Wildlife and Fisheries \$50, don't issue that citizen a driver's license, commercial license, award him a state contract, etc. This point is another argument to consolidate state government administration. Louisiana is ONE organization. We should not continue to allow citizens to not pay their fines or taxes and still enjoy all the benefits from citizens that do pay their fines and taxes.

First, I must say that I am as skeptical as the next regarding this suggestions program and as a business person who runs such a program within my company.

In short, it's time for the elected officials to show us that you are serious about this. The way to do that is to tackle some of the sacred agencies and hold them accountable. Buy the way, Federal Grants ARE TAX DOLLARS and do come from your constituents. We don't want to waste those dollars either.

Any suggested cuts are going to encounter resistance, this is the nature of the beast. What is important to me is likely not important to many other state citizens. Hence, the question really must be "What do we want Vs What we are willing and able to pay for".

Let's talk about DPS&C - While all of the nice strobe lights, especially those hidden lights within the headlights and taillights are really cool; cool Vs necessity within an agency which is asking for more money? You tell me? By the way, are we still operating three radio communications systems for this agency? What about the many distinct "police departments" within the agency, having a commander for each with different missions and staff certainly does cost us extra dollars.

Suggestion — Get back to the basics. Eliminate special commemorative badges, expensive "luxury" features on the police cars. Combine the multiple agencies into the one agency and re-define it's overall mission. Get rid of the State Owned vehicles (except for Troopers who are patrolling the road) and pay mileage reimbursement for "actual business documented mileage". Remove take home vehicle privileges for any employee who lives more than 15 miles from his/her office. Those who do keep take home vehicles should be taxed accordingly. Combine administrative positions and use technology to cut the staff. Electronically Interface with insurance company computers to track vehicle insurance by VIN number instead of license plate or drivers license number so that when someone changes insurance carriers state resources are not tied up sending cancellation notices that are useless, requiring citizen response, panic and more administrative processing. Cut the gaming control staff which serves no real public safety function, while some staff is necessary we have entirely too much. The Highway Safety Commission duplicates services provided by Federal Agencies, it has to go. Motor Vehicles Police have to go as well. These services could be absorbed by those troopers sitting on the side of a road waiting for a call and by local police agencies with a little coordination effort.

How many different law enforcement agencies do we have in this state anyway? Could we not combine some of these and eliminate substantial overlap, administrative staff and costs? What business does each Levee District, Port Authority or Toll Authority have with its own police agency to begin with? Absorbing them into the State Police troops could eliminate over 2/3 of the support staff (commanders, supervisors, clerks, buildings, fuel depots, repair persons, communications frequencies, and on and on and on); not to mention corruption associated with many of the agencies.

Suggestion — Eliminate all state law enforcement agencies except for State Police and transfer the "non rank" patrol staff to the nearest State Police Troop all other staff not on direct patrol duty would be eliminated. Have the local Troop pick up the "public safety" functions of those agencies.

Eliminate the duplicated services by Wildlife and Fisheries and Sheriff's Office water patrol agencies, either spread them out or get rid of one of them.

Get the Causeway Police out of the private sector "road side assistance" business. Yes, I know it's a Federal grant, but Federal Grants are TAX DOLLARS. If these folks want to be in that business, fire them and let them start a tow truck business.

The Orleans Parish Criminal Sheriff's office is asking for more money. Why does this agency need / have a huge Water Rescue Division? What's the purpose of this agency again? I don't recall it having anything to do with patrolling the water ways, do you?

Suggestion — Re-define the charter of local agencies who use state funds, (do the same for all state agencies) force them to stay within the bounds of the agencies charter and purpose, allow no overlapping of services, or eliminate and absorb the agency into another and accomplish the "no overlap policy" that way.

What about all the surplus vehicles?

Suggestion — If an agency does not use a vehicle 80% of the time (for real government business) it should not have the vehicle. Establish a State Motor Pool in each region for ALL agencies to draw those "have to have" vehicles from (a state vehicle rental fleet for lack of a better word). Share specialty vehicles among agencies, share busses, vans, tractors, dump trucks, moving trucks, etc. Each agency does not require it's own fleet of everything!

Why is the state the only "business" which still purchases company cars? Most businesses realized long ago that the budget minded thing to do was to reimburse for mileage expenses for actual "official business usage." Hate to say it, but this applies to elected officials as well!

Suggestion — All the notes above plus eliminate take home vehicle privileges and eliminate vehicles by doing mileage reimbursement for actual business mileage. Including Judges, Legislature, Senate, Governor, Lt. Governor, Cabinet Members, etc.

How about getting away from giving tax breaks to the "old industry" of industrial plants? They don't produce enough quality jobs, they pollute and people don't want to live in areas that are within a few miles of them.

That tax money can go to education. Education is the single biggest incentive to the "new industry" high tech industry. Get away from tax breaks for old technology

industrial plants so that high tech professionals such as myself can move back home to Louisiana. I had to move out of state to get a decent computer programmer job!

Eliminate Levee Boards. Contact The Commissioner of Elections to learn how she cut wasteful spending in her office and then apply her principles to each and every dept. in government. Investigate all spending by every dept, every contract, investigate all employees to see if fewer employees could do an equally efficient job. Investigate former legislators who are liaisons for Departments, find out what they get paid for the work they do. Investigate spending in each and every dept. Investigate all contracts. Investigate all spending. Investigate all spending. Investigate all spending.

1. Educate the public that everything cost money, our money. Huge undertaking.
 2. Eliminate TOPS program. Great but not free as many think.
 3. Privatize Dept. of Highways. We have demonstrated over many years that we can't fix it.
 4. Appoint some senior positions now elected. Take politics out of it and hire true professionals.
 5. Eliminate 1 out of 6 administrative positions across the board in state government. Saves significant \$'s and leads to improved efficiency.
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The biggest and best change at any level of government would be to require a priority number on each spending bill. Only two priorities would be non-changeable:

Pay to elected officials (including retired elected officials) — LAST

Pay to those appointed by elected officials (including retired appointees) — Last minus 1

Then provide that to increase government income in ANY WAY, would require a 3/4 vote of the legislative body concerned, with the proviso that no one who voted for such an increase would ever be eligible for public office again. There would be some screaming at first, but I'm sure things would be worked out fairly quickly.

CHARITY HOSPITALS IN STATE AS FOLLOWS: NEW ORLEANS, LALLIE KEMP INDEPENDENCE, WASHINGTON/ST. TAMMANY BOGALUSA, LAFAYETTE, BATON ROUGE, LAKE CHARLES, ALEXANDRIA, SHREVEPORT, MONROE.

THE COST OF LABORATORY OPERATIONS AS INDEPENDENT SUPPLIERS OF LAB TESTING IS EXTREMELY COSTLY. NO HOSPITAL ADMINISTRATOR WANTS TO GIVE UP THE POWER BASE THE LAB PROVIDES. WERE THE BULK OF THE TESTING CONSOLIDATED INTO A

CENTRAL FACILITY WHERE SPECIMENS COULD BE SENT AND PROCESSED, THE RESULT WOULD SAVE THE STATE MILLIONS. CENTRAL PROCESSING COULD TELEPROCESS RESULTS INFO TO THE VARIOUS LOCATIONS. THE ARGUMENT AGAINST BY ADMINISTRATORS WOULD BE THEY NEED STAT (FAST RESULTS). THIS IS ONLY TRUE FOR ABOUT 10% OF THE TESTING. EACH FACILITY COULD HAVE A LOW COST STAT ANALYZER FOR ELECTOLYTES, GLUCOSE, ETC. PROCEEDURES AND ALL OF THE BULK TESTING TRANSPORTED TO THE CENTRAL LAB. THIS IDEA IS NOT NEW. NO LEGISLATORS HAVE HAD THE GUTS TO IMPLEMENT THE CONCEPT.

PROHIBIT use of outside consultants and attorneys! What the hell are we paying CITY and STATE attorneys for if they can't do the work! An outside consultant or attorney's number one interest is HIS or HER OWN or their COMPANY'S interest. A city or state government employee's interest is the agency they work for. You figure out who's going to be looking out for the government's best interest.

1.) As a Louisiana public school teacher for 32 years (only one more to go for retirement) I do believe that it would be so easy to save money "IF" this state could tie legislative pay raises with public school teacher pay raises. This way nobody would get a raise!

2.) No La. Legislator or Governor would be able to get ANY pay raise until all public school teachers had salaries brought up to the Year 2000 Southern Average. Again, nobody would get a raise!

3.) Cut out the State Mandated In-Service for teachers whereby students are dismissed 1/2 day. Just this past Thursday, 9/14/00, teachers were sent to classrooms to view a 2-hour video on Tai Chi! I work out in the gym every day after school. I don't need this video and it was a total waste of my time and taxpayer money! I wonder whose legislator's brother-in-law or sister-in-law needed a job and thought this idea was a good one!!

4.) Stop rewarding mediocrity via the TOPS scholarships. Just how many students in Vo. Tech/Jr. College/ 4-year colleges did not make their grade-point average the first year and lost TOPS? We squander away enough money. So, if you don't have to "pay it back" you don't have to study! We're paying for them to just have a "good time!" That money would be better spent on lowering the class size in all grades K-12.

5.) We are now spending way too much time "teaching the test (Iowa and LEAP)" rather than teaching subject matter. After all, we need to pressure teachers even more so we can "look good" to the public and so we continue to "window dress." The message to teachers is clear. . . .never mind teaching, just teach the test !!!

6.) Lastly, stand back from the EXIT as you might get run over, as more and more teachers like myself edge closer to retirement each and everyday. You won't find the young colts like the old work horses like myself and others. NOTHING, not even a "DOUBLE DROP PROGRAM" would keep me from getting OUT of public education in Louisiana! And good luck, because after the failure of the November 7th election to try to help education in this state you're going to need all the good luck you can find!

Put a limit on the type of vehicles provided to State employees. Limit State employees to more cost and fuel efficient vehicles.

Another area that is abused is way to many unclassified state employees. Too many political appointees. And way to may Undersecretaries in each department of our State Government. Smaller state government means lower taxes and the BEST way to attract new business.

You are spending a lot of money to install a new personnel/payroll system that still uses "batch" processing to report and process time. The time still must be captured by each individual agency timekeeper and then entered into the system. Many agencies rely on pen and ink sign in sheets and then manual entry into the system. This is a very expensive and error prone operation. There is no provision at this time for time to be collected and processed electronically in a manner which would emulate the process followed by modern companies. The State employees 100,000 (classified and unclassified) employees and we continue to capture time in a 19th century manner.

Most state agencies have employees on board for the sole purpose of processing state required paperwork. There is no parallel in industry, or in any efficient operation.

The state has its own "self insurance" program. I realize that the State Employees Group Benefits Program employees a lot of people but what large company is self insured these days and State Group is notoriously inefficient, ask the physician, hospitals and other providers who submit claims. Better yet, ask the employees who pay for this "coverage."

Automobile Registration Fees should be renewed annually with ALL revenue collected for all out-of-cycle years ABSOLUTELY dedicated BY LAW, no cutbacks in existing funding, to improving Louisiana's Federal, State, and City highways.

STOP FUNDING DEVELOPMENT OF GOLF COURSES WITH TAXPAYER MONEY.

Cut the Fat e-mails received as of 9/20/00:

Regarding DHH:

1. End the artificial subdivision between Mental Health and Substance Abuse clinics. Studies show the majority of the people receiving these services have problems that crossover. If services were combined, money would be saved, buildings could be closed, and citizens could receive better, more integrated services.

2. Increase the number of beds and group home slots at East Louisiana State Hospital. The expense of treating patients at East and providing group home care should be less than private hospitalization, because most of these patients have Medicaid.

3. Standardize the formulary across Mental Health Clinics. Some clinics offer certain medications while other can not have that same medication.

4. The newer psychiatric medications are expensive, but would keep many patients from return trips to the hospital with fewer side effects.

5. Rather than closing public health units, have a sliding scale of payment and provide staff to bill and accept payment for Medicaid, insurance, and private reimbursement (similar to what the Mental Health clinics do).

Fiscal Responsibility:

1. Stop giving business an easy ride. Big business comes in pollutes, imports management talent and gets a ride on the local tax base. When we do not have decent schools for their employees to send their children, decent streets, or decent public buildings(because there were no tax dollars), Big Business moves its corporate headquarters or a large part of the educated workforce to another state.

2. What is the tax structure for business in other states?

3. Educate politicians, educate the people on the need for fair property taxes.

All over this country police departments are using dangerous, illegal, substandard, brain splattering partitions to isolate the front seat area from the rear seat area of police cruisers.

The legally complying partition that I offer looks better, costs less, installs with no damage, lasts longer and transfers much more easily.

You can avoid the liability caused by actions like those of Tim Ray in the first attached document or of the Clinton, LA police officer in the second attached document, by getting uncertified partition manufacturers off of all state and municipal bid lists and by making sure that the manufacturers on the bid lists are offering certified complying products.

The applicability of auto safety standards is evident in the third and fourth attached documents. Correction of this situation has the potential to save the state millions of dollars by the elimination of liability and reduced costs. There is a better product available that costs less.

The recommendations below for cutting costs in Louisiana are from a retired Louisiana State employee with 32 years experience in government.

Louisiana's universities are one of the State's biggest wasters of tax money, and all funding and personnel associated with race and gender preferences and proportional representation at them should be eliminated, regardless of the euphemisms used to describe them, such as diversity, affirmative action, equal opportunity, gender equity, under represented populations, etc. We must sue to set aside the higher education desegregation settlement of 1994, which is wasting \$121,000,000 and ruining LSU. The Women and Gender Studies programs and the African American Studies program and others of similar descriptions at all universities should be eliminated.

Diversity at LSU has produced classroom instructors who cannot speak understandable English and a useless, expensive, and sexist Women's and Gender Studies Program that offered a course entitled Queer Theater, described as lesbian, and deals in feminist nonsense. It has also produced a useless, expensive, and racist African-American Studies Program that has offered courses in pidgin, Creole, folklore, and four courses in Swahili.

Grambling State University should be eliminated entirely, Southern University should be transformed into a community college, which it is in fact, and major surgery should be performed on LSU. All programs at LSU dealing with tax supported entertainment should be eliminated, such as Music and Dramatic Arts, all literature programs, including poetry, plays, acting, and all dance instruction. The French and English Departments should be eliminated as not providing anything useful.

Eliminate all secretarial positions dealing with preparing the written word and replace them with word processors to be operated by the individual preparing the written documents.

The biggest way to save this state money is to quit hiring outside companies to look at ways to save money in state agencies. Why does all state agencies hire private sector companies to do studies on cost saving measures? The Legislature could mandate that state employees "who do the work" be brought in to look at ways to save money. Not the head of agencies the real workers in the field!! The state is spending millions hiring all these "so called experts" who don't even do the job that they are looking at. They many have good ideas, but until you do the job you really don't know how to cut and save money. It is so interesting to watch people in Baton Rouge in all of the state offices say "lets cut this and that, close this office, cut this program, lay this person off". Then when these items are cut out they don't understand why the jobs are not being done and state employees have to work overtime (for free) to get the job done and meet all deadlines. That could be why Medicaid has so many lawsuits against. But Medicaid is the first agency that is safe from layoffs and increased so free services for the uninsured.

The main reason state employees don't speak up on cost saving measures are the price we will have to pay in the work place. (ex: If you want to save that kind of money maybe your position should be eliminated"). But we do have ideas on ways to save money, and we will state them if we can be promised we will not be in trouble for speaking up.

Other example of waste is the state purchasing practice. It is REAL ODD that we are required to purchase from certain companies and in the long run pay more. When there are local companies that have the same product cheaper. The local company is

more customer friendly, has prompt service and also handles complaints within one to two days. I have nothing against some of the companies, but this practice just doesn't make sense. Also we will be audited, reprimanded, and even required to pay for these items out of our own pocket if we do not purchase from the SPECIAL companies.

Also, there are several of us who do not understand why parts of the Department of Health and Hospitals lose student workers, restricted appointments, job appointments and details. But other departments do not, in fact, they term a probational employee and put them on a job appointment just they can keep them. I was always under the impression that the Department of Health and Hospitals was one employer and also so was the State of Louisiana.

Please investigate the Hammond Developmental Center's employees leaving early. At two - five minutes before shift change they are already Hwy. 190 & Shadow Creek Dr. At ten - fifteen minutes past the shift change they are speeding down the subdivision streets to get to work. There are a lot of vehicles not just eight - ten.

Also, can you explain the financial support given to Wal-Mart to build the warehouse in Robert, La. against the wishes of the local residents. Some say this was a "done deal" before they knew what was happening.

Could the state eliminate some of the state owned vehicles which are also used as personal vehicles? Is there an estimate of the annual cost for this luxury?

- Require that all state employees be reimbursed at the same rate for travel expenses. Eliminate exceptions for "important" state officials.
 - Use lighter weight paper in publications to save bulk mail costs. Direct agencies to use postcards instead of letters whenever possible. Reduce postal costs by conducting a comprehensive mail audit of all state government agencies.
 - Direct all state agencies, boards and commissions to stop paying commercial "plant services" to water their plants. Everyone should water their own plants.
 - Bid out the 15th riverboat gambling license if it is going to be issued. At least allow the current applicants the opportunity to offer the state a higher percentage/tax than the statute requires. I think it has been conclusively demonstrated that these licenses have value.
 - The Department of Revenue could use bank "lockboxes" to provide for the immediate deposit of all checks mailed to the department. The increase in the state's cash flow and the investment earnings thereon will more than offset the cost of this service. Additional revenue should be over \$2 million a year.
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Remove the incentive clauses for early job completion from highway contracts. If contractors can finish jobs months in advance to receive bonuses, they must be over bidding jobs. If a contractor finishes the job early, it is already to his advantage because he can start on another job sooner. Also, check on the double dipping of university

personnel. They do teaching at other institutions for pay during their normal working hours. There are excessive waste in State Government in particularly, in the purchasing of furniture, equipment, etc. for administrators.

How about cutting out a fully staffed large company to manage a bridge. The causeway has a structure like a large company and with a police force. This is a major waste of money. The CCC has a very similar structure. Some of the money could be added to the State Police to police these structures with a huge savings.

Sweep around your own door step first...The legislature once again looks out for its own special needs last session then wants the working folks to ante up come October by voting for some hastily thrown together proposals because guess what? We're broke again. Funny how the money is always there for slush funds, special interest items/special interest groups, don't you think?

Why is the state in the insurance business? State Group Benefits raises rates every July, cuts benefits and is losing money. If the private sector can provide group ins. to employees at a nominal fee why can't La. with 50,000+ employees contract with a private sector company and eliminate the Group Benefits Program altogether ?

State employees could tell you plenty about where to look for the waste but why go to the trouble. The bottom line is nothing would be done about it. The name of the game is Cover Your _ _ _ . The special and regular legislative sessions this year proves that we are still doing "bizness the Looziana Way."

To the few true reformers left in the legislature, I feel your pain.

Since the State Of Louisiana issues licenses, of every type, including drivers licenses, simply put, pay your taxes or we take your license, no matter what type of license.

Lawyer, no problem, go to the bar and have the license taken away 'til the taxes are paid. Doctor, sorry no fees today, take it away 'til the taxes are paid. The list is long indeed. So you may ask, "What's the problem?"

In this state, you can't because there is no law on the books which would allow this action to take place. Think a law would ever be passed to do so? Doubt that, just look around the state and see what action has or has not been taken in the past to correct other problems this state has.

How about getting away from giving tax breaks to the "old industry" of industrial plants? They don't produce enough quality jobs, they pollute and people don't want to live in areas that are within a few miles of them.

That tax money can go to education. Education is the single biggest incentive to the "new industry" high tech industry. Get away from tax breaks for old technology industrial plants so that high tech professionals such as myself can move back home to Louisiana. I had to move out of state to get a decent computer programmer job!

The focus of our efforts to improve LA's educational system seems to target the "Southern Regional Average" as the benchmark for teacher pay, test scores, etc. I recommend that every department of state government should be scrutinized by the same standards (compare them to the Southern regional average for their counterpart). It may seem simplistic, but we need to start somewhere.

1. Eliminate the Governor's slush funds. There is no accountability for these funds and it is simply a legal way to buy votes.
 2. Eliminate the funds for Senators and Representatives to send constituent newsletters. If I want to read what is going on - I will read the newspaper or check the internet. Once again - it is tax payer funded campaign funds.
 3. The State Employee Group Benefit Program is running \$100-\$120 million in the red and they will soon be asking for the taxpayers to bail out this disaster of a benefit plan. In fact, at the last Board Meeting they were already trying to figure out how to ask the Governor for more money. The Board has repeatedly refused to implement a number of benefit changes that would save the plan millions of dollars, as published by their own Benefit and Rate Committee. If they aren't willing to adopt a "closed formulary" like every other major insurer has done which will save \$5 million or put a \$150 deductible on prescription benefits which will save \$16.3 million (their own numbers, not mine) then I am sorry but they created this problem and the taxpayer should not have to pay for their decisions.
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"You know how we were told that all the "pass-throughs" were eliminated from the budget this past year? Well not all. There was a pass-through that was moved from the budget of DCRT to the Board of Regents for the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities. The original amount of the was \$1.7million.

"This amount was reduced, but there still is around a million that goes to this non-profit organization that does not provide essential nor necessary services. Of course when the sister of Steve Perry sits on their board, I guess you can get most anything. The item was hidden in the Regents' budget by adding it into another category so that it wouldn't show up as a single-item pass-through."

It would appear that Civil Service contributes to the expansion in the number of government employees. I understand the theory behind civil service protection, but the pay classifications demand that government must grow. When one reaches the end of a pay range, without a statewide pay raise, their salary is frozen until they can advance to a higher position. If there are no positions available, you make more supervisors. Once at the end of your pay range, to qualify for a pay increase as a supervisor, you need more employees to supervise. Thus the growth in the number of employees. There has to be a better method of providing salary increases. As the current system requires growth for salary increases, the number of employees grows as does the expenditure for salaries. It

would appear that the number of employees could be cut, with an increase in the salaries of those remaining, and there still be a savings in the state budget with respect to salaries.

First of all I would like to thank you for the opportunity to contribute to ideas that may affect the state in its quest for fiscal responsibility. Mind you that this is not a lecture or a judgement on my part to condemn but for all of us to take our responsibility of making this country greater nation that it is.

First of all I would like to encourage you to think small. This at first may not sound like the right approach. Now is the time and never overlook the small or what we perceive as small. We can accomplish the small and not be overwhelmed as we would be tackling the large. The accumulation of the small usually grows at an astounding rate to become the large results we are looking for. What I am referring to is the e-mail ideas sent in to you and listed in the Morning Advocate. Look well as what the public is saying. There you will find a lot of simple wisdom.

A more direct approach to savings can be found in the State's purchasing of products and services. We the business community have corrupted many of our political representatives. We offer incentives to officials in return for favoring our bids, more to the point. When specifications are drawn up for a bid, have an unbiased party knowledgeable in the field write up the specs. so that the playing field is level. Do not allow one of the bidding parties to specify the specs, thus eliminating competition and saving the state great sums of money.

I don't know if there is a need but if I can be of any assistance to the state I am a retired individual and would like to contribute to the community. Maybe I can help. Again thanks for the opportunity to respond.

I am an attorney that worked for the Court of Appeal for two years, the State Attorney General for four years, and LWCC for one year and left for the private sector for good as they all had their share of problems. I think that you are correct in your premise that we must make government more efficient if we are to meet our future obligations.

The number one problem that I saw in state government is that the system promotes and in fact encourages and rewards inefficiency. Civil Service, Seniority, and playing politics to get reelected consume fast resources and send good employees elsewhere while the ones that should leave remain. Government must try to create a system much like private enterprise where profit and competition keep you honest. At the Attorney General's Office I worked in a self generated division that was often times handcuffed by a state budget funding system. There is absolutely no incentive to have a year-end surplus as the funds are sucked up by the general fund so at the end of the fiscal year everyone goes on a supply and equipment feeding frenzy to spend the surplus and hoard paper postage and supplies. Just think how much cash the state has in hoarded supplies. If managers were rewarded with bonuses or allowed to retain a portion of the surplus for rainy days or future capital expenditures the general fund might enjoy great influxes at year's end. Look at what the state tried to punish the lottery for saving to

build its own building at no extra cost to the state. (Steal the funds and make them finance it.) What message does that send?

Nor is there any incentive to collect funds due the state. The state will not allocate resources to do collect funds but wants all that you collect and chastises you if you do not collect it, i.e. Wildlife and Fisheries. Most state debt is below \$200.00 and not cost efficient to recover. However, if the state invested in its future like Illinois and had a computer network of all state departments and enacted a comprehensive state debt law with attorney fees, interest, and penalties and offset authority for tax and revenue, the court system, hospitals, wildlife and fisheries, lost property, student loans, AFDC, child support, before the state refunds anything to anyone they ascertain whether you owe any state department money and said funds are deducted.

- Small co-pays for state hospitals : Reduce strain and needless visits
- End the sacred cow attitude toward judiciary on salaries and funding.
- Make all assistant District Attorneys full time without outside practices. You need fewer, can pay them more and get better work as is the case in metro areas.
- Revamp or abolish civil service to make it easier to terminate employees.
- Combine Sec. of State and Elections.
- Make AG and Insurance Comm appointed so fewer state resources are devoted to reelection. Or publish their budgetary irresponsibility giving them incentive to be efficient not to hire political appointees.
- GIVE A GOOD EXAMPLE AND RUN THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH MORE EFFICIENTLY.
- Build Toll roads like Fla.
- Reform the election laws to eliminate the extra days for tax elections and special elections to reduce the costs of elections and eliminate state presidential primary.
- Reward initiative and efficiency in government not stifle it.
- Revise and update state income tax withholding schedule as it seems we always get a federal refund and owe the state robbing it of cash flow.
- Bid out state services to private companies to create competition.
- Try to make more departments self generating.
- Quit expanding higher education and its physical plant which stretched our resources too thin and makes our cost of maintaining the buildings more costly.

Good Luck and keep up the good fight.

A couple of ideas I have (although I doubt if anyone in legislature has the courage to do such necessary things):

(1) Place a moratorium on all highway construction and invest in mass transit, including passenger rail. This is a long-term solution that is working in many cities the size of Baton Rouge. However, the highway construction PACs will probably win the argument with their money rather than their logic of fiscal sense.

(2) End the Industrial Property Tax Exemption and other money given to transnational corporations who are part of Louisiana's plantation economy. Such liberal tax giveaways that produce NO or FEW jobs are what makes Louisiana's economy remain a banana republic rather than free enterprise driven.

Here are my suggestions for what it's worth, although I doubt the legislature can resist the special interests and take them seriously.

Try this: cut all supervisory positions that do not directly supervise at least 4 people. Look at the organization charts!! They are full of people who are directly supervising two, three and often just one person. That is not management!!!!!! Those people don't have anything to do except make work for others. You always demand position cuts, but they always cut out the workers. That leaves you with expensive supervisors who are bosses to one or two people. Go through a department's org chart and cut the positions that don't spread out over at least 4 people. Most departments have straight line charts, one person managing one person. Cut them out, then you will have a leaner, meaner workforce and probably more work will get done, without all those managers standing around getting in the real workers way. You probably don't want to make those kind of waves though.

Cut The Fat e-mails as of 9/26/00:

As you begin to cut the fat, please consider the discussion on closing Intermediate Care Facilities for the Mentally Retarded (ICFMR)s and redirecting services for people with disabilities to be provided in the community. This proposal could save the state millions of dollars each year. If Medicaid dollars were directed to support people with disabilities in our Louisiana communities, the state would still be: 1) receiving a large federal match for every dollar spent, 2) complying with federal laws to offer services in the least restrictive environment, and 3) keeping families together. For many years, families from all over the state have talked to the legislature about supporting children and adults with disabilities in their own homes, but the bottom line is, it is more cost efficient and there are statistics to prove it.

The problem in our state is there is a strong political contingent which supports the institutions (the buildings) because they employ many people within their walls.

People working inside those huge buildings, providing services to people with disabilities, are needed in Louisiana, but we need them outside the walls. It makes much more fiscal sense for our state.

Most people with disabilities don't choose their disability. They don't choose their family either. But, each one comes from a family and each family has a home. To let people live in their families' home with supports is more cost efficient than if state dollars provide the home and the supports.

People with disabilities can live and contribute in their own communities. With supports they can be voters, home owners, tax payers. All over the United States people living in their communities instead of institutions is now the norm and not the exception. Those other states must know something. Please check it out.

Thanks for the opportunity to contribute.

I think that the TOPS program should either be eliminated or re-worked. The idea for this was terrific; however, when you cannot keep charity institutions open, when your university and K-12 teachers are among the most underpaid in the U.S., and when you're continually "droning" through the press that more things need to be cut, the legislature needs to get more realistic and take a long, hard look at the Big Economic Picture. Prioritize, don't politicize! The bills that most of you champion seem to be designed with you in mind, to keep you in office---our forefathers weren't aware of the biggest threat to our government: the professional politician.

Also, I do not think the legislature should be able to vote their own raises--that should be the public's job through some type of referendum- you are political servants, hired and answerable to the body politic, you are not nobility.

Special sessions are a huge waste of money. Legislators should discipline themselves to complete their work within the regular session. Having taxpayers fund a special session to allow Harrah's to reduce its debt would be a colossal affront!

A second frivolous waste is fighting the Olmstead Decision. January 14, 2000, all states were notified that the Supreme Court and HCFA mandated that they provide home and community-based care rather than institutional care (including nursing homes) if the client could and wanted to live in a less restrictive environment. Louisiana could lose its Federal Medicaid and Medicare money for failure to comply. In *Barthelemy versus DHH*, five nursing home residents have sued for less restrictive care. DHH, with budget problems causing the closure of many programs, has hired a Washington, D.C. law firm to fight the *Barthelemy* suit. Why waste the money and risk losing billions? Rumor says the expenditure is necessary to placate the many legislators who have a financial interest in nursing homes.

What political suicide! Louisiana's nursing homes are only 80% filled, as no one wants to live in them. They are 90 to 95% Medicaid funded. They are the least cost effective of all methods of long term care. It is estimated that many nursing home residents need housing, only. Why can't Louisiana learn from other states that are providing better care for less money?

Get rid of the slush funds...all of them.

Have the tobacco money go toward health care. All of it.

No more trips for legislators or state employees, especially out of the country.

Change civil service so that you can get rid of useless employees.

Let Susan Hank Terrell disband her department.

Don't even think about giving in to Harrah's threats.

Cut The Fat postal mail received 10/2/00: Original letter is on file with Senate Fiscal Services staff.

Text of letter:

Someone should look into the waste in manpower at universities. Employees do not seem to be accountable to anyone for working hours. It is difficult or almost impossible to find faculty and administration in their office during a working day. Why aren't they required to work 8-hour days like the rest of the world? In some universities there are few or no classes offered on Fridays — Some workers beyond the average retirement age of 65 continue in their plush – non-responsibility jobs, doing essentially nothing to further their FAT retirement checks — This is a real waste.

Cut The Fat e-mails received as of 10/10/00:

You can cut the fat by not throwing away \$60,000 worth of brass doors. Why do we need to "Cut the fat" if we have money to restore the Long monument (\$50-70,000) and purchase \$60,000 doors? (I'm not opposed to restoration and upkeep, but we're talking about principle.) Did you know that only the top 1% of Louisianians earn more than \$70,000/year?

If our golden gambling cow is so "golden," why is the state losing money? I suggest that we get rid of gambling in the state and find real solutions to state debt besides a "get rich quick," I mean "Get lucky tonight" tax on the poor.

How about we just deposit the checks that come into the state treasury as part of normal tax receipts? For example, my Father mailed his quarterly state tax payment check on September 14th. It's October 6th and the check still hasn't cleared the bank yet.

Granted that missing the interest from the deposit of one check doesn't seem like much, but I bet that this isn't the only check sitting in someone's IN basket.

You might want to recommend that the State Auditor look into the procedures for handling the depositing of checks received by state agencies.

Here's how to get more revenue: (1) enforce the law to pay quarterly income taxes, even without penalties and interest the state will receive funds earlier and gain interest; and (2) enforce the penalties and interest, and (3) cash income tax checks when they are rec'd, not after the forms are processed.

The rest areas along I-10 should be leased out to private industry. This would change a State expense to a State income. Adopt the bid process used for oil and gas offshore leases.

Get rid of the slush funds. I don't need a dead head tell me what a fine job he is doing using my tax dollars. I can read the paper and listen to the news to find out what the real story is.

In this morning's Advocate, an article stated that \$100 million in surplus was found. Why and how was this money not realized during the legislative session when so much taxing was raised and then another will appear on this Saturday's ballot?

If this much was made cutting waste, then we know more can be cut because we are aware of "slush" and "pork" funds passed without objections. One of us worked for the state for a while and then retired as a teacher, and both of us having dealings with various stated departments. So, we are aware of the amount of employees it takes to do the job that perhaps as few as half could do. Also, it seems that it is always essential employees and essential services that are cut before taxes are inflicted upon us.

As we near election day (although it seems every other month is an election of some type here in Louisiana), I'd like to suggest Louisiana SAVE MONEY and increase voter interest by doing what most other States do:

1. Hold all items for ONE election. Simply attach State or local items to the general election.

2. Absentee voting. This is the only State I've lived in where you have to be present to vote "absentee"!

- a. If you sincerely want to "get out the vote" allow ALL registered voters who chose to do so, to complete their ballots in the privacy of their own home and mail the ballots in -- as other States do.

- b. In those other, more progressive States, all one has to do is check a box on a postcard, sign it and they receive their ballot in the mail.
 - c. This also allows the voter time to study the issues and make a more informed decision.
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These overpasses ALL go over the two lane secondary roads whereas almost all of the I-10 intersections have the expensive 4 lanes of I-10 stay on the ground and have the cheap 2 lane road go over. I have made numerous requests of the Hwy. Dept. for an answer to this to no avail.

For almost thirty years, as an employee of the state, I have observed the less than business-like practices of the bureaus of state government including the legislature.

1. Strategic or master plans for a unit of government is useless without the appropriate budget to carry out the goals of the plan. For example, I know that a two-year budget cycle would be much more efficient and render a cost savings in the long run. I am a very conservative spender of my budget. Since my University does not get final approval for departmental/College spending frequently until September, many of my equipment purchases do not occur until Spring and I may not have time due to my work schedule to spend what I have in the annual budget or I have only half enough left to buy that computer or other equipment I may need. I can't save the money to put with the next year's budget to get the item since I am on a year-to year budget.

Because of my frugality, someone else in my university may over spend and they get the benefit of my savings. I don't buy just to spend the money in my budget. I am aware that the legislature passed a constitutional amendment in 1999 to permit 2 year budgets which was turned down by the voters, however, little publicity was given to the positive effects of a two year budget in the planning and appropriate expending of state agency budgets and the constitutional amendment failed. An administrator has to plan for his/her goals for their department the way I play poker..."on the to come," and pray that the legislature will give his/her agency the funding to carry out the goals of the agency.

2. Being in higher education and health care, I am very aware of the constitutional and statutorily dedicated funds. Being within the 25-28% of the budget which can be cut should a revenue shortfall occur, which it has multiple times in my 20 years as an administrator, I see the need to undedicate the dedicated funds and give all agencies an across the board cut. That way, higher education and health care do not get 10-15% cuts in the neck while elementary and secondary education do not suffer. Higher education is a lean mean machine financially. We are experiencing an aging faculty syndrome with no replacements wishing to work for the salaries we earn. I currently have 7 vacant positions (4 of which are frozen by my University in order to conserve funds with the need to employ a Dean (as soon as I retire) The Dean and most Faculty earn 79-80% of the Southern mean (average). So far only two candidates have applied for my position. One wanted \$85,000. salary (reasonable) and the other has changed jobs 6 times in 6 years. I am paying \$34,000 in overload pay to my nursing faculty because I can't replace anyone either due to lack of candidates or frozen positions. My current faculty's mean

age is 55 years with two more retiring in May. There is a critical shortage of nurses right now, but I can't increase my enrollment and will shortly have to institute a student waiting list for students who want to enter the clinical portion of their Nursing education by state schools in Louisiana is excellent since we are either first or in the top 4-5 states on pass rates for the national licensing examination. We won't be much longer without some assistance to our universities.

3. I have also served on a local state hospital board. Turning over the functions of the charity hospital to the private sector will only drive the cost to the state for health care of the indigent and the working poor higher. I strongly resent that Louisiana leaves 200 to 400 million dollars in Washington each year in Medicaid funding because we do an inadequate job of matching federal funds. We have the lowest health care level in the nation with some of the sickest citizens. We need better watchdogs over Medicaid fraud, not cuts in the drug prescription filling by pharmacists. Further, we can expect to have more state employees than the rest of the 49 states because we count our health care workers in state agencies as state employees and other states do not have a charity system and their public health units are run by the county. I personally prefer our charity system of health care for the indigent and working poor. I believe that they do an excellent job. I am not sure that I prefer LSU running the system because I believe that they skim funding to run the residency programs with private contractors for preceptorships by private doctors.

4. We could save money by cutting out some of the bureaucratic red tape in the State Purchasing Department and the Office of Facilities, Planning and Control. I have spent 19 years trying to get a building for nursing at my University. Nine years since the Capital Outlay was funded. Because of numerous delays due to lack of attention on the part of supervising architects in OFPC, the named private architects for my university have been forced to submit complete plans (ready for bid) for two buildings separated by a nine month architectural study when all agreed from the Board of Regents through the Division of Administration that I needed a new building based on age of the current building, lack of space and a huge enrollment. To further complicate the matter, I had to submit to a lengthy architectural study which cost the state in excess of \$67,000. Then the OFPC forced the named architect to hire the architect who did the study to design the building and several costly change orders are in the works because of design flaws. The building was to be ready for occupancy August 16th and I am still waiting to take occupancy because of a fire marshal turn down on a break in the fire wall due to a design flaw. State Purchasing causes loss of opportunities for cheaper prices on equipment and items because of the numerous rules in place. I realize that the rules are there to keep every one honest, but private businesses can get better prices in most instances in spite of our state contract prices. Frequently, the lower price really indicates inferior products.

These are just a few of the areas I believe need examination to save the state money. Thank you for this opportunity to share my ideas.

It's real simple. Freeze spending! And cut gov.15% across the board! That means EVERY DEPT.

Just find out from other states how they do it. Why do we have more state employees per capita than any other state in the nation?

Combine related departments eliminating overlapping jobs. Reduce the number of supervisors and cut redundancy. The state is top heavy. Reduce the pay for legislatures and cut out any pay for special sessions. Make better use of existing buildings by cutting the size and elegance of offices. Consolidate into fewer buildings and less space. Reduce the automobile fleet. no government furnished vehicles unless on state business and on state time. Commuting done in POV for everyone and no helicopter or airplane for state officials. No scrambler for radio traffic. In short start cutting from the top and squeeze.

I read the article in the Morning Advocate last week, and have comments regarding your statement "I don't know that the nature of our Civil Service System trains people to be managers properly." I believe that you hit on a very important point, but I believe that the problem is much bigger than just training people in management techniques. If meaningful changes are to be made with regards to cutting costs and trimming waste, then this problem should be examined with a "look at the bigger picture" approach.

It is disappointing to have contact with state agencies and have to deal with people who lack knowledge, and are incompetent and unmotivated. As citizens, we have often have bad experiences with state offices. I recently had an experience that led me to thinking about why there is waste and inefficiency in state departments. I was looking through the civil service job listings, and looking for jobs that would match my education and skills. (I have a Masters degree in Rehabilitation Counseling, and have been in private sector rehab for five years). I was disturbed to read the required qualifications for many of the jobs. Many professional type positions, or management positions did not even require a college degree. All that was required were 8 years work experience. No specifics. I have rarely seen qualifications like that for professional or managerial jobs in the private sector.

In my field, a bachelor's degree in about 20 different areas, almost all of which were unrelated to Vocational rehabilitation is all that is required to qualify for a job as a rehabilitation counselor with Louisiana Rehabilitation Services. I noted that Jerry LeBlanc was recently concerned about re-funding that agency because there was so much waste. I don't blame him. There are people working in that agency who have degrees in such fields as agriculture, or journalism. This is a fact. This does not mean that they are incompetent or ignorant people, but how can they possibly decide what services are appropriate for persons with disabilities, when they have not been educated in assessing and counseling persons with disabilities? Also, how can you attract qualified people in a position such as this when the starting pay is only about one-half of what a qualified licensed and certified vocational rehabilitation counselor can make in the private sector.

There are three universities in Louisiana who graduate several people each year with Master's Degrees in Rehabilitation Counseling. The State of Louisiana also has a licensing board for Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors. This has become a highly specialized and professional field, and most in this field are very well credentialed in this

state. Why don't we make use of these professionals for that particular state department? If Civil Service recruited these individuals with competitive salaries, I am certain that you would find that although you might have to raise your starting pay a little, you would reap benefits in long-term cost savings because you would have employees who know how to assess transferable skills of the disabled, and have been educated in appropriate methods for getting them into the workforce. Efficiency and productivity would go way up, as would cost savings, and waste would decrease. I know this is getting lengthy, but if you want to know more, I would be happy to discuss. I could give you a couple of examples of LRS clients who were ill advised by "counselors" who did not have the education and knowledge to be dispensing advice or state money. What a waste. Why not raise the level of competence, and the rest will follow!

I suspect that there are other state departments that have a similar situation, just from my review of state job listings and requirements.

I also noted while looking at the job postings that many civil service jobs that do not require a college education often have starting pay higher than some positions that do require a college degree. This is a discrepancy that should be looked at.

I realize that my suggestions are not a "quick fix", and that correcting state civil service to get more professional, educated, qualified people would take years, but you always have to begin somewhere. I also realize that there would be tremendous opposition to raising the bar, because so many people within the infrastructure spend a great deal of time and effort protecting their jobs. But in the long run, getting competent people to administer state programs would save much bigger dollars than having employees cut down on using scotch tape!

Cut The Fat e-mails received as of 10/25/00:

My compliments to opening up the lines of communication. We can assist in lower costs within the governmental structure.

Re: Reducing Material Cost

Our experience with governmental agencies have indicated a tremendous waste when it comes to hard copies and materials. We have been successful in working with the military and national guard entities by reducing material costs, simply using new technology to distribute materials on a user-friendly CD format. Private industry is picking up on this more and more.

Material Cost Case Study:

\$45 per annual report - survey
8,500 copies
Total project cost = \$382,500

New User Friendly CD Format = \$10,000 (production)
Duplication Cost = \$25,000
Total project cost = \$35,000

Savings = 90%

I'm confident there are other ways for us to contribute to the goal... a phone call or meeting is requested to better understand the needs you have. Please contact us, we look forward to your call. Thank you in advance and God bless.

Thanks for asking us. Why not just use the recent spending report as your base. It's all there. Here are ideas I like though ...

Reduce state staffing, Louisiana has too many people on payroll.

Require Universities and public schools to make repairs to existing structures before requesting new construction. This can be part of the award process - grant no money for new construction unless current facilities are in good repair.

Get rid of all programs with a demand of less than 1 % of the population (or 2 % or 3 %, or set your own reasonable limit)

Get rid of all discretionary money (slush funds). If a fund has no demand for its intended purpose, close it, move the money to a secondary designated fund.

Require highway contractors or building contractors to actually live up to the timing and quality of the contract, or pay penalties.

Tie the size of the department of Agriculture (or the size of its budget) to the number of acres being actively farmed. That way, it is always the "right size for the job"

Limit the funding of Louisiana Inc. and require it to form a state chamber of commerce to generate additional funding through contributions and an organization that could really work.

Get rid of stockpiling of vacation time (if you don't use it in a year, you lose it; just like the real world) and exorbitant pension programs within all state programs.

Somehow prevent the act of retiring and re-hiring. Meaning no one can collect a pension from state service while currently employed by the state. This is flagrant double-dipping.

Require open books of the Tiger Athletic Fund (and all other private athletic funds). I believe this will help relieve the funding burden on LSU and other universities by public pressure. The public will actually see how much money rolls in and will require sports to help the universities, not just pay lip service to them.

Close down/consolidate some of our colleges.

Consolidate higher education into a single entity (single board, single budget, etc.)

The simplest way to do this would likely be the hardest to pass through the legislature. It is also the basic premise for what is wrong with both the federal and state governments.

Force government to have zero based budgets. This will end the end of the year spending blitz that takes place to over spend their annual budget in order to get an increase.

The other, also not likely to be seen in my lifetime, is to stop the "pet" programs that waste tax dollars like golf courses, boat ramps, etc.

Our forefathers gave government limited power for a reason. Look around and it is evident that they had in uncanny ability to foresee what would (and has) happen to us with and inflated government.

The biggest waste in state government as well as city government is providing free transportation for government workers. Several jobs could be saved and many more could be created if the "big wigs" drove their own vehicles to and from work.

Try this experiment: Next time you drive to or from work look around at fellow motorist and count the number of government vehicles as compared to private industry vehicles. The results may shock you!

Do more work and fire more people.

Consolidate parish departments (less supervisors doing nothing in government buildings). Office personnel shouldn't be assigned public vehicles to take home. They should have their own vehicles and use their own gas to go to work and take their family grocery shopping. Pay legislators and the governor minimum wage and give them a monthly bonus based on what is actually accomplished to improve the state. Eliminate state dinners for all the legislators. Give them free meals when a milestone in their goals is achieved.

Why is the road maintenance in the state so poor? We feel like we are driving off-road all the time. Could it be because they wait until we have foot high bumps and ditches? Could it be because the asphalt is packed together by means of using the heaviest guy in the crew to walk around it until he/she feels is hard enough?

Why can't the state attract manufacturing companies? Casinos and service companies only take money in.

The governor shouldn't have the authority to raise taxes whenever a deficit is forthcoming. The people shouldn't pay for their mistakes and overspending.

1. Abolish the Causeway Commission. We all know that this is an agency that exists for the sole purpose of handing out jobs to cronies as political favors. Dump it

and streamline it under the operations of the State Police, not only saving money but improving the quality of employees tremendously. There, that was easy.

2. Abolish all Levee Boards. See above.

3. Abolish the Crescent City Connection Police. See above. (P.S. Thank you Bob Harvey for the New Orleans version of "The Bridge to Nowhere" at the lakefront. I'm sure the friends you doled out contracts to for this wonderful piece of urban architecture appreciate the business.)

4. Abolish Campus Police at all state institutions of higher learning. Let local police forces take over this role. This will be more cost-efficient and once again lead to more professionalism. In addition, and most importantly, it would go a long way to eliminating the incredible underreporting of crimes which happen on college campuses. This underreporting is a great scandal which has not been discussed recently.

5. Make the Regional Transit Authority a genuine regional transit authority. We all know that the reason why other parishes don't want a true regional bus system- racism. Get over it and let's not have a separate operation in each parish of the greater New Orleans area.

I'm short on time- more to come later! This is a great idea

Why not put some observers on the highway, I-12, before you get to O'Neal coming West and have them drive up and down the highway at the posted speed and see how many trucks disregard the speed limit. Then enforce the laws and make them pay heavy penalties to prevent accidents that cause deaths to our citizens. A fair amount of money could be assessed on these speeding drivers. You may need to check all highways.

Set some standards by which a state agency is performing what is expected. Evaluate each one objectively and if they are not that valuable to the overall scheme of things, cut their strings.

Do not buy plantations while you are cutting health assistance to the unfortunate.

It appears someone has dropped the ball in the budget process. Are there too many hands(minds) in the budgeting process? Who is calling the shots in that process?

Ask the governor to start wearing a motorcycle helmet until he leaves office. Of course, he will say that by law he has a right to not wear a helmet. But, state funerals are costly, and this matter is brought home all too vividly by the recent death of Missouri's governor. He ought to do everything he can to protect himself during the time he is in office. Our tax payer money goes for bodyguards, escorts, etc. Why should he flaunt it by increasing the odds of serious injury or death just for his own selfish macho thoughts?

Another way that has occurred to me for the state and its cities to save money is to enforce their ordinary traffic laws. For people to be allowed to run through red lights with impunity is not only obviously dangerous, it is outrageous! Besides the danger and the encouragement of other motorist discourtesy (which I've also witnessed), if these

people were pulled over and fined, state and city coffers would be running over! And, it wouldn't take long for them to get the message.

But, I've had a Baton Rouge police lieutenant tell me with a straight face that there's NOTHING the police can do! HOGWASH! People used to stop for red lights as a matter of course. Why don't they do so now?! Because they know the laws are no longer enforced.

I do stop at red lights, but, ridiculously, I do so at my own peril that someone will rear-end me, expecting me to run the light as everyone else does, and intending to do so him- or herself. It has become commonplace to see dump trucks and even 18-wheelers speed up rather than slow down in order to get ahead of others whose turn it is to proceed. I can promise you that if I ever am hit, and live to tell about it, I will sue not only the offending motorist but the city and/or state to the full extent of the law for their collective negligence. And I'd win! (If I sound angry, it's because I am!)

Last but not least, I remember when the speed limit was lowered to 60 mph on the Atchafalaya Swamp Freeway because of DEATHS which had already occurred there. I can tell you that when I travel it, fairly often, I am almost the only one who goes 60. There is maybe one state policeman pulling people over. Obviously, he isn't enough as no one is deterred. If this dangerous highway were properly patrolled, not only would it be safer, but any investment necessary for more troopers would quickly be returned with appreciable interest from the stiff fines that could be imposed on speeding motorists.

Let Louisiana be first in something. Let our state lead the nation back to sanity and safety by enforcing the simple, common sense law already on the books of stopping at traffic lights as we used to be required to do, are still required to do, but no longer do. It might also be a way to make some money!

What about the "Acadiana Trail" and "Louisiana Scenic Byways" signs that are placed along highways? This seems to be a tremendous waste and attracts no attention at all. Hope this helps and please keep up the good work.

Cut The Fat e-mails received as of 10/30/00:

I think that someone has be willing to make the hard decisions. Not everyone is going to like cost cutting but it HAS to be done. I especially feel like our educational system is ridiculously overrun with administrators and bureaucrats. If we ever want to come out of the swamp and enter the 21st century (Not that we ever even entered the 20th). We have to throw out the political corruption and reliance on state job creation (which I believe are connected). There needs to be zero tolerance for the business as usual attitude in Louisiana. People like Cleo Fields and Edwin Edwards make me sick. They are dragging us down with their narcissistic practice of putting their own petty desires ahead of what's good for the state. I also think that the tax plans being voted on this election are a total joke. We need a complete overhaul and someone up there needs to be brave enough to propose it and then sell it. Get rid of the homestead exemption and model our tax structure on the states that are making it work for them.

Cut The Fat e-mails received as of 1/3/01:

A focus on speeding 18-wheelers could/should bring in substantial revenues, I would think, and make our highways safer as well. I am tired of seeing monies spent on that "dangerous" curving I-10 approach to the Mississippi River bridge, the one that truckers insist on falling off of periodically. The roadway isn't at fault, only the drivers. There should be substantial fines levied against speeding trucks. The ones in place are apparently not enough of a deterrent, so increase them, increase the safety of the Interstate Highways, and increase the bank account of Louisiana.

I know this came up at the last legislative session. We spend hundreds of millions of dollars on IT, but we're not willing to spend \$110k for an expert that can help us consolidate our systems and put a common sense check on IT spending. This one position will likely save 100 times his/her salary in reduced IT spending.

I bet we spend a lot of money on laptops and PCs - often replacing when an upgrade is sufficient (memory and processor requirements change, monitors, keyboards, etc don't change much). Most workers only use word processors and e-mail anyway. But when we do need to replace computers, why not look at "refurbished" computers. See attached article for more info.

<http://cnet.com/news/0-1006-200-3799152.html?tag=st.ne.1002.tgif.ni>

I remember a study on streamlining state government which recommended that the Departments of Revenue and Natural Resources be combined. Since both Departments will soon be occupying the same building, why can't the two agencies be combined into one?

If this is not possible, why not combine the Departments of Wildlife and Fisheries and Natural Resources? These Departments were under one agency (Department of Conservation) until the early 1930's.

Cut the SPENDING from the top down instead of from the bottom up. I have been involved in education for 30+ years. The story hasn't changed in that length of time. Politicians use education as a political football. Election year everyone loves the teachers. After they are in office there is never any money. It amazes me how one week we are broke and the next we have a 100 million surplus. However, when teacher raises are brought up again, we are broke again. In reality, teacher raises does not mean teacher raises, it means everyone from the administrators to the janitors. Give the TEACHERS a raise NOT everyone. I voted against the amendments because it was a fraud. Just as the

gambling money was advertised to go to education but was not stipulated in the bill, neither was this money truly earmarked to go to the TEACHERS. Honestly, I was afraid the raise in income tax would be higher than my raise and I would end up in the hole.

The very group of people who would pay more taxed was the salary range of teachers — \$25,000 to \$50,000. Of course many teachers in poor parishes earn less than \$25,000. Have you politicians ever looked at the pay scales? Five years ago Union Parish paid beginning teachers \$14,000—BELOW POVERTY LEVEL. You fooled the public once but they would not be fooled again. The public cares about education but they have no faith in the honesty of our politicians to do what is right for the citizens in Louisiana. Then you will give yourself a raise and whine because you can't make ends meet. **THAT IS NOT YOU ONLY FULL TIME JOB; QUIT WHINING.**

The purchase of the plantation home is the very reason I am taking my precious time to email CUT THE FAT. That is last straw as far as outrageous spending is concerned. You are closing and tearing up rest stops and then buy a plantation home.

People do not even want to drive through this state because it looks disgraceful. UNBELIEVABLE. That money used wisely in the education system, especially for teachers raises, would have increased in value over and over. NOW to top off this situation, Mr. Hollis has decided something was wrong with the sale. Who lined their pockets on that one? Legislator think the public is stupid but we are not and I hope we keep saying no until you straighten up your act. The citizens of Louisiana deserve a fair shake.

Perhaps we are asking the wrong questions in this election year. Our Senators and Congressmen do not pay into Social Security, and, of course, therefore they do not collect from it. Social Security benefits were not suitable for persons of their rare elevation in society. They felt they should have a special plan for themselves. Many years ago they voted in their benefit plan. In more recent years, no congress person has felt the need to change it. After all, it is a great plan.

For all practical purposes their plan works like this. When they retire, they continue to draw their same pay until they die, except it may be increased from time to time by the cost of living adjustments.

For example, former Senator Bradley, and his wife, may be expected to draw \$7,900,000.00, with Mrs. Bradley drawing \$275,000.00 during the last year of her life. This is calculated on an average life span for each.

Their cost for this excellent plan is \$0, nada, zilch. This little perk they voted in for themselves is free to them. You and I pick up the tab for this plan.

This fine retirement plan fund come directly from the General Funds. Our tax dollars at work! Social Security, which you and I pay into every payday for our own retirement, with an equal amount matched by our employer, we can expect to get an average of \$1,000.00 per month from our Social Security plan. Or, we would have to collect our benefits for 681 years and 1 month to equal the Bradley's benefits.

Imagine for a moment that you could structure a retirement plan so desirable that people would have extra amounts deducted from their pay to enhance their own personal retirement income. A retirement plan that worked so well, that Railroad Employees, Postal Workers, and others who were not in the plan would clamor to be included.

This is how good Social Security could be, if only one small change were made. That change would be to jerk the Golden Fleece Retirement Plan out from under the Senators and Congressmen. Put them into the Social Security plan with the rest of us. Then watch how fast they would fix it!!!

If enough people receive this, maybe a seed will be planted, and maybe good changes will evolve.

I am a State Employee and I am concerned about the increasing cost of health insurance for myself and family. SEGBP now costs me \$ 251.58/ month. The state of Louisiana is presently paying the same amount monthly. These combined payments amount to \$ 503.16 a month. This is the cost for health insurance for myself and family. And we are a part of a group of some 55,000 state employees. I started employment with the state of Louisiana knowing that the pay was not the greatest, but that the benefits (retirement, insurance, security) came close to equalizing the private sector pay. That is no longer the case!

I applied for an health insurance quote with Blue Cross last week. I was contacted by one of their agents this week. For myself and my family, it would cost me \$516 a month. SEGBP wants to increase our premiums 14.65 % on Jan. 1, 2001. This is after repeated increases in the past. This current request (currently on hold by SEGBP) would bring the total monthly cost to \$ 576.86 for the same family coverage.

I suggest that the State of Louisiana remove itself from the insurance business and seriously look into privatization of SEGBP. Allow existing insurance companies to bid on these services annually. The existing SEGBP employees could be absorbed by other state agencies or laid off. Would this be a viable alternative to SEGBP as we now know it?

Hope someone is reading the message very clear as a result of the recent election. This state is supposed to be run the same as a business — when you have declining revenues you don't give raises, bonuses, extra holidays, etc; you cut the fat in expenditures, staff, and programs. Additionally, you start looking at fringe benefit that must be cut. That tax swap was a slap at the intelligence of the people. It was directed to benefit a minority group in the state and place a greater burden on a majority group. Please read Sunday's paper as to the parishes supporting the tax swap. This plantation purchase is another fiasco insulting the intelligence of the people. The next fiasco probably will be easing of tax burden on the New Orleans casino. What is it going to take for you folks representing us poor dumb folks to understand that we want tax relief — not burden.

Several months back, the order was given to trim fat in the state which was nothing more than a false front.. That was a joke, because what was done amounted to an increase in all types of fees — referred to as administrative fees. Examples: Motor vehicle licensing fees; Fee for permit to install septic tank was increased 100 %, from \$50 to \$100. (This occurred in Concordia Parish)

The people are watching. It's time to clean house and cut the FAT .

According an article in the October 21st issue of the Baton Rouge Advocate, much time and money has been collected, including a \$100,000 donation from Governor Foster's own war chest to sell voters on a plan to raise taxes for education and to privatize the state's economic development efforts. We have a much better suggestion and feel that a majority of voters in this state would agree with us.

With a mounting stack of uncollected taxes, fees and miscellaneous fines, including a \$1 million potential tax exemption being considered by our legislature for the land based casino in New Orleans, we should be focusing instead on developing a corporation called: "Louisiana, Think - Collections."

After doing a little research, we have come across the following items that can easily be documented in the Baton Rouge Advocate. To simplify matters we have decided to list the articles by date and title, at least those we are aware of.

- 05/05/1998 " Uncollected taxes put at \$245 million" (refers to uncollected delinquent taxes);
- 08/22/2000 "Audit rebukes La. Tax collectors" (\$200 million owed in delinquent taxes);
- 10/26/2000 "Bad-check pile angers lawmakers" (\$1.5 million in uncollected motor vehicle fees);
- 10/27/2000 "Wildlife and Fisheries writes off \$2.1 million penalties" (uncollected fines on hunting violations);
- 10/28/2000 "Some firms getting tax breaks not paying taxes" (nearly 50 companies with tax breaks owe \$500,000);
- 10/28/2000 "\$500 million due state?" (Under payment of gas and oil royalties).

In addition, there's also a Louisiana Transportation Trust Fund that was suppose to be used for improving state highways. Remember that one? According to an October 22nd editorial "Our Views" article titled "Ewing proposes breaking promise", in 1989 we were told that the increase in a gasoline tax would ensure that roads and bridges were constructed and maintained in good condition. However, according to The Advocate, the trust fund monies were used to pay health insurance premiums for retired highway workers and projects not included in the highway priority program. There was also the matter of \$50,000 being used to pay the five-month salary of a Washington lobbyist.

This state needs to seriously pursue all outstanding debts. This includes the recovery of underpaid royalties in amounts of up to \$500 million owed to Louisiana for gas and oil. According to advising attorney Spencer Hoise of California, the total includes \$173 million in alleged underpayment of royalties and an estimated \$300 million in underpaid severance taxes.

Then there's the allegation of nearly 50 companies, that get tax breaks from the state of Louisiana, owing almost \$500,000 in back taxes. It's one thing to get a tax break. It's another to blatantly refuse to pay what you do owe! Try that little number with the IRS and see how far you'll get!

The keyword in every election always seems to be EDUCATION. We certainly don't want to deprive our children of a good education. However, it's time we got

educated and looked at the real problem in this state. Somebody's not doing his or her job and we will certainly remember that come Election Day.

Louisiana, think!!!

Cut the Fat e-mails received as of 1/25/01:

To the Committee on Cut the Fat:

In today's situation Ward Constables and Justices of the Peace are not needed and this should be cut out completely. I wonder what the total cost is per year for salaries and also retirement benefits. I know several of them and they are useless and of very little benefit to the people. The Sheriffs in each Parish could take care of the little business that they have to take care of. I am very sincere in this recommendation but I doubt that it will receive any consideration.

Don't spend any tax payers money on keeping Saints in New Orleans.

Cut The Fat e-mails received as of 3/12/01:

I am concerned with the way our charity hospital (Earl K. Long) is being managed. I have been on staff there for a few years and it has become very difficult to see patients check into the emergency room and know that they will be waiting for any where from 6 to 8 hours before they will see a physician. I am very aware that E.K.L is a great hospital and we are a very needed resource, but it is a shame that hours of the walk-in clinic have been cut, thus diverting common complaints to the ER.

I have worked for 12 hours and returned the next day to see the same patients still waiting in the emergency room to be admitted after being seen by a physician and orders written for admit. This occurs because there are not enough nurses to staff beds on the floors. Inadequate staffing levels (nurses, clerks, aides) coupled with the cut back of hours in the walk-in clinic, results in our utilizing the most expensive setting (ER) to treat colds, flu and other non-emergency complaints. I am aware that all hospitals have problems but EKL's budget is not being used wisely.

I love my work at E.K.L and feel that we provide a great service and good medical treatment, but it makes our jobs very difficult, knowing that we are not doing the best we can for the public. We can do better to help the health and wealth of all the people in Louisiana.

Suggestion: support measures to utilize Nurse Practitioners in delivery of Medicaid services. The increased education provided to patients by these providers results in greater compliance with health care regimens, improved understanding of their

illness, better utilization of health care services, improved ability to practice safe self-care techniques, less hospital and ER visits, and savings to taxpayers.

I have some more ideas that I think the Cut The Fat Committee should consider. I think that some of the Legislators benefits should be looked at. Here is a list of the items that if implemented would save the state money.

1) Monthly expense allowance of \$500.00 (unvouchered). I see no need why any state employee, including Senators and Representatives should be allowed to receive \$500.00 per month for whatever they wish. Obviously part or all of this money in many instances is not used for reimbursement for state business. I think that all unvouchered expenses should not be reimbursed.

2) Per diem of \$103.00 per day. When travelling on state business, classified state employees receive \$6.00 for breakfast, \$8.00 for lunch, and \$12.00 for dinner for a total of \$26.00 per day (all subject to time restrictions). Why does a member of the Legislator need \$77.00 more than classified state employees to eat while travelling? I would think that a cut of 50% or more in the \$103.00 per diem is in order.

3) Mileage reimbursement of 32.5 cents per mile. Classified state employees are reimbursed at the rate of .28 cents per mile when using personal vehicles for state business. I see no need for an increased reimbursement rate for Legislators. Gas prices and vehicle maintenance are the same for members of the Legislators and classified state employees. This is an easy one - obviously no need for the difference here.

4) Office Expense Allowance of \$500.00 per month. Seems like a rather large amount for office supplies and postage for one Legislator.

5) House Supplemental Expense Account of \$1500.00 per month. Covers some of the same items in #4 such as postage, office supplies, rent. Why the need for two accounts? Was the first the original expense account and did the Legislature pass a law granting themselves another at some point?

6) Health Insurance (up to 223.62 per month). A footnote to the health insurance issue details that a Legislator covered under another employer provided group health insurance program may elect to have the state pay the legislator's contribution, under that plan, directly to the insurer (up to the amount that would normally be contributed for the Legislator's participation in the State Employee's Group Benefits Program). Why do members of the Legislature have this luxury while classified state employees are stuck in the State Employees' Group Benefits Program? Many state employees would like this option as well to better provide insurance coverage for our families as the State Employees' Benefit Program is not the best insurance available. But I am sure that you know about the problems with the State Employees' Benefit Program, why else would the option for Legislator's to participate in another program be available? This benefit should also be discontinued. State Legislators' participation would only enhance the State Employees' Benefit Program as it would add more money to the Program. Leaving this option available only weakens the system for the rest of the state employees who have no other insurance options.

The more research I do the more I realize that the Louisiana Legislature seems to think that it deserves better treatment than classified state employees as evidenced by some of the benefits that are only available to members of the Legislature.

If you are truly interested in "cutting the fat" in state government then I believe that all state agencies / entities need to be looked at, including the Legislature. There are areas that can be cut within the Legislature just as there are areas within classified agencies that can endure cuts.

The Group Benefits Insurance plan is losing millions of dollars for a number of reasons. This missive concerns one of those reasons that could be remedied by the legislature or the governor acting alone.

It has come to my attention that the Dept. of Corrections requires its employees to bring a Dr.'s note to a supervisor before being allowed to return to work after taking sick leave. Even if the head of the Department says this is not so, I believe the front line supervisors require it. (I do not work for DPS) It does not matter if the employee was on sick leave for only an hour. It does not matter if the employee only suffered from a headache, common cold, stomach pain, general discomfort or a simple flu or a chronic illness they control with medication without constant medical supervision. If the employee took any amount of sick leave for any reason he must present a Dr.'s note to return to work.

Civil Service rules state that any supervisor may require a Dr.'s note after an absence of 3 days of sick leave. I do not know how many agencies or departments or divisions or cells within divisions require a Dr.'s note to return to work, but if only the Dept. of Corrections and parts of other agencies adhere to this sloppy management practice they are needlessly running up the cost of insurance for all employees and taxpayers by a large amount.

If a supervisor does not trust his employee with sick leave there are cheaper and more reliable methods of checking up on them. A phone call home for instance. A Dr.'s note proves nothing other than a person visited the Dr. at great expense to us all. The Dr.'s note does not state whether the person was actually sick! Further, those employees who were actually sick were charged with the inconvenience, aggravation and discomfort of making a trip to the Dr., and all that entails, for a simple headache or common cold and told to take aspirin, which they already knew. But the employee had to pay an extra \$15 to \$25 for the useless trip and advice and the other members of the plan and taxpayers had to pay the other \$60 to \$100 for the useless Dr.'s note.

This is nothing more than a bad and lazy management practice that proves nothing and regulates nothing but costs all of us a fortune each year. Add up the cost of a trip to the Dr. and multiply it by the times people are needlessly forced to go to the Dr. for a cold, headache, sinus trouble, stomach discomfort, back pain, hemorrhoid flare-ups, basic flu, gas, hangovers, diarrhea, stubbed toes, to say nothing of those employees (and there are many of them) with chronic diseases that can be managed without a trip to a Dr. every time there is a flare-up. i.e. diabetes, back troubles, sinus conditions, chronic fatigue, allergies, arthritis, etc., etc., etc.

The heads of executive departments should be instructed not to order employees to go to a Dr. simply for supervisory purposes. Employees should only be referred to a Dr. IF THEY NEED MEDICAL ATTENTION. The Doctor's office should not be used as a regulatory tool by inadequate supervisors and agencies to monitor employee sick leave. WE CAN'T AFFORD IT! This practice unnecessarily drives up the cost of health

insurance. My uneducated guess is that the Group Benefits Plan spends well over a million dollars a year because agencies and lazy supervisors use the doctor's office as a sick leave monitoring device. Remember you have to add in the cost of all the paper work associated with billing. Please stop the practice by regulation or statute if need be.

Sounds as if you have the message as to what has to be done in LA to get fiscal and operation responsibility initiated. It is time to cut programs, cut staff, cut holidays, cut sick leave, cut vacations, cut the cancerous retirement programs and get rid of the "trough" people like V. Bussey and others appointed to various boards, etc. The legislature needs to take to task the Education department for these hefty raises recently awarded. The state Auditor needs to be given greater leeway to uncover more crap like he has found at Grambling and Northeast. The gambling house in New Orleans needs to go down the tube. The golf trails of K B need to be curtailed.

Value Engineering programs should be implemented throughout State government to assess present systems for efficiency and effectiveness. Peer review processes need to be implemented. As a professional in industry, I was heavily involved in the implementation and execution of such programs and, therefore, know they will work.

Want to save money for the state? Answer these questions.

1) Why did the state police need a badge that was only worn for one year (or less)? Referring to the millennium badge they wore during the year 2000.

2) Why do legislators get paid a per diem on top of their salary for days in session?

3) Why do legislators get paid for each day when extra sessions are called? regular state employees don't get paid overtime.

4) Why does support enforcement services (dss/ofs/ses, child support office) pay the da offices millions of dollars a year to perform services that could be better performed by ses?

5) Why do some state agencies provide take home cars for non-emergency personnel? referring to probation and parole officers and some dmv employees.

6) Why doesn't the legislature pass laws to allow ses (child support agency) to recover fees to be more self sufficient?

Cut The Fat e-mails received as of 3/16/01:

I have been a visiting teacher at a Baton Rouge area high school for the last three years. Now that my wife has finished her degree in Medical Physics @ LSU we are leaving for another state. I wish that teaching tenure would be eliminated from all public school programs in every state as long as you could find a way for teachers within 33% of teaching to retirement could be protected. As short as the teaching job market is right now nobody is going to dump a good teacher no matter how close they are to retirement.

Also, getting rid of the incompetent teachers would make my job much easier. And if my quality of teaching is not good enough for me to keep my job then I do not deserve to keep it. There are also other things that you could do to help improve the efficiency of education.

Your mandatory attendance policy has so many loop holes that it is useless. It does not work to hold teachers accountable unless students and parents are also held accountable for their part of the learning process. Some states have looked into fining parents if student attendance is poor.

Teachers spend too much time covering their rear-end from lawsuits to teach at maximum efficiency. What about a lawsuit bill that covers teachers unless harmful intent can be proven? Work this in with the dropping of tenure clause. This way you give something and get something in return. A win-win situation for all.

I began completing the questionnaire and ran out of room commenting, so I decided an e-mail would give me more room.

I believe you have done a good job thus far in your tenure as Senator. I appreciate your priority of education, however, I believe the priority of the members of the Legislature, the Governor, and the people of the State of Louisiana should change. I believe the priority should be the CHILDREN of the state, and that includes education. Recent drastic cuts in the budgets of DSS and DHH have hurt these, the most vulnerable population of our state, as well as the poor, the needy, and the elderly. With every state dollar that is cut from the budgets of these two agencies, we lose at least 50% more in federal funds. And that only represents the matching funds.

We are at risk of losing even more federal dollars because our manpower has been reduced so drastically, we become unable to meet mandatory federal guidelines and statutes, therefore jeopardizing the accompanying federal funds to run the programs. Other state agencies are not subject to such severe cuts because they have court suits filed against them that prevent action in reducing their funding and workforce. It would appear that the only way DSS and DHH can survive may be federal lawsuits. It is a shame that a child's life is not enough to prevent cuts.

We are told over and over to do more with less, while we get budget cuts, yet at the same time see Mark Drennen receive his fifth pay raise in as many years. Welfare recipients get less than \$80 per month per person. Foster parents are expected to take care of a child in the custody of the state (most of whom have emotional problems so devastating, they need intensive treatment) for about \$350 per month. Would you care for one of these foster children who might be a bedwetter, firestarter, headbanger, and animal killer all rolled into one? How many of us could do that? Or better yet, how many legislators would do it?

As we do more with less, are we going to tell that child that has had the hell beat out of him by his father, or the little girl that is being sexually abused by her mother's boyfriend, "I'm sorry. We don't have the funds to pay a foster home to take care of you. You will just have to stay where you are." Or, "we've had so many reductions in staff, we don't have anyone to come see about you because they are all out on other calls. Maybe we can get to you next week." Or are we going to tell the parent of a critically ill child who receives Medicaid "We know the Federal government will reimburse us for

this treatment, but we don't have to provide the service, so we are choosing not to because we don't have the 24% in matching funds." What are we going to tell the children?

Cut the fat, but cut in all departments. We are cutting into muscle and lean meat in DSS and DHH. Put yourself in the steps of the people who work in these departments, particularly the ones in the Office of Community Services, who on a daily basis deal with children and families in great need, many children who have been subject to horrors beyond belief. Go into one of the underprivileged, drug-infested, gang run neighborhoods in the middle of the night, without police protection and remove five terrified children who have been locked up in their apartment for three days with no food and no adult supervision. See what the child protection workers have to deal with and then cut the budget!

Yes, children need a good education, but they also need a safe environment where they can grow to adulthood. They need to know their basic needs are being provided. They need to know that there are adults who care about them.

Now, to get to the teachers' pay raises. Yes, they do deserve a pay raise. I know I would not want their jobs! But I have to wonder, how important to them are the children they teach and the job they have in preparing these children when they choose to go on strike, forcing the closure of schools at particularly critical times when they should be preparing the students for LEAP tests and exams? Plus, they don't want to be accountable for the job they are (or aren't) doing.

As long as I am whining, I might as well bring up the fact that state employees have not had a cost of living raise in eleven years. There's never any money in the budget for that. Plus our insurance benefits keep going down as our premiums go up. It makes it difficult being a single parent whose husband chooses not to pay child support.

Can we go on strike? No, we are prevented from doing that. Can we run for political office or even publicly support a candidate? No, we are not even free to do that. Sure, I could leave state employment and find something else. I've had opportunities, but I haven't left. Why? I've wanted to be a social worker since I was 13 years old. And until recently, I have been very happy in what I do and in the services that I have provided to the citizens of the State. There was job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is diminishing because there is little or no appreciation for the work carried out by the caring people of my agency. There is certainly no monetary reward, even for a job well done. We are expected to go far beyond the line of duty because of budget cuts. But where does it stop? Job turn-over is increasing because people are scared they will lose their jobs so they go somewhere else, but perhaps more disheartening is the fact that they are getting burned out from the stress because they are trying to cover their own caseload, plus someone else's. And federal mandates to meet certain expectations are increasing. How can we meet the standards of best practices and positive outcomes for children when we don't have the staff or other resources to do it?

I may lose my job over this e-mail because we usually are not even allowed to express our views in regards to our agencies. That is just a risk I guess I will have to take.

I appreciate the opportunity to share my thoughts with you. I just hope and pray that as you enter the legislative sessions, you think about some of the things I have said.

Don't allow the Governor to hold our children and families hostage in order for him to get his way.

Oh, by the way, do I sound like a bleeding heart liberal? Quite the contrary, I am a very conservative Republican. Always have been, always will be. But some things are just wrong!

I look forward to hearing your response and seeing what impact my comments may have.

Recently I read an article from the Advocate in which you discussed civil service jobs, in that a person could keep a job, not do the work and the state is unable to fire that person.

I want to know How to Protect My Rights as an Employee in the State of Louisiana? Please explain to me, as a professional, How a company has the right to terminate me after only two months of employment. No advanced warning. No written or verbal warning. Nothing. How is it that someone can lose a job because she is not personally liked by the supervisor?

Tell me what I need to do in order to change the law. An Employee should have certain rights.

What sense does it make for an agency to cut a civil servant's position (who has been doing good work) and hire a contractor at a much higher cost to do the same work?

It merely allows that agency to claim they decreased staff and payroll expenses, while not mentioning the substantial increase in contract expenditures. As I have worked for the state over 20 years, this game is getting really old.

I have worked in private industry and I currently work for State Government. I have worked in managerial and non-managerial positions at private and State agencies.

One issue that stands out the most is the number of supervisors and managers within State government that would bankrupt a private company.

When I worked in the private sector, there would be 1 supervisor per 10 to 12 employees. A vice president may have 3 to 5 supervisors under him/her. In State government, there is 1 supervisor per every 4 to 5 employees and a manager for every 2 to 3 supervisors.

Have you ever looked at the Organizational Charts of each agency? Then you may want to compare that to the actual payroll data. What is on paper is not always the reality.

Since our agency has been cut and the freeze on hiring was implemented, we have the same number of chiefs as we do Indians. Unfortunately, it is the Indians trying to work the double, sometimes triple, work loads. In my specific division, there are 2 supervisors. One has 3 employees working under him and the other has 5 employees working under her. There is a manager over them that has 4 supervisors under him. We have an Officer that has 3 managers under her. Then we have an Assistant Director and a Director. I have more bosses than I have co-workers in my division.

If someone from a direct line employee quits, transfers out or is fired, that position is cut or frozen. When the supervisor or manager positions become available, they promote someone into it very quickly so they won't lose a managerial position.

I suggest you take the time to look at each agency and its hierarchy of employees. I am not against management, I've been there myself and enjoyed it very much. I'm looking forward to being in management again. But from what I have seen, I do understand at least one reason why State Government would be in bankruptcy if it was in the same league as a private company.

I have a suggestion on how to find ways to "Cut the Fat." If you want to know how to set up a successful retail chain, you would want to talk to Sam Walton. If you want to know how to set up a successful automobile plant, you would want to talk to Henry Ford. I suggest that this state seek out the most successful cost cutters, outside of politics, and seek their opinion.

I have three types in mind. One, a successful CFO of a large public company could lead a research team to find non-partisan cost cutting measures. Second, the same (CFO) corresponding position at a large non-profit organization. Third, seek out previous officials in other states that came up with ideas to get their state out of a similar budget shortfall and hire a small team to give their advice as well. These three research studies should produce numerous ideas in which the legislature can implement to "Cut the Fat."

Sometimes we cannot see the forest for the trees and we need an outside opinion to get us back on track. The Louisiana leaders that are in charge of this challenge do not have to be experts at solving the problem themselves. They do, however, need to realize this and seek expert advice. The most successful people at any endeavor rarely are the experts that have all the answers. They just know where to find the answers when they need them.